

Mississippi Headwaters - Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem

Fiscal Year 1999 Annual Report Region 3

Agassiz NWR in northwest Minnesota has been home to extensive research on moose, wolf and other species.

-USFWS Photo by Dave Mattsson



Ecosystem Description

The river that is often referred to as the “spine” of America originates in the Mississippi Headwaters/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem, which includes most of Minnesota as well as portions of Wisconsin and Iowa. Once characterized by forests and broad sweeps of glaciated prairies, the landscape today is mostly woodland in the north transitioning to vast areas of agricultural lands sprinkled with remnants of the tallgrass prairie in the south. Five watersheds dominate the ecosystem, including the Des Moines, Mississippi, Minnesota, St. Croix, and Red rivers.

Among the most pressing resource problems in this ecosystem are those that affect the amount and quality of habitat. Forests, remaining prairies, and wetlands face continued threats as urban and agricultural areas expand. Pollution from agricultural, industrial, and urban runoff threatens waterways, while recreationists, extractive industries and timber interests vie for access to prime wildlife areas. Invasive plants and animals, such as purple loosestrife and zebra mussels, are edging out native



Prescribed burns, like this one at Minnesota Valley NWR, help native vegetation and improve wildlife habitat.

-USFWS Photo by Eric Eckel

species in some parts of the ecosystem. The result is fragmentation and degradation of existing habitat and loss of biodiversity.

With these major threats identified, the Mississippi Headwaters/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem Team has begun to focus on prioritizing its on-the-ground projects to achieve team goals and objectives. In partnership with other state, federal, local, and non-governmental interests, the team is tackling some of the most pressing challenges.

The Ecosystem Team is continuing to develop both internal and external partnerships throughout the ecosystem. The Service's Region 6, U.S. Geological Survey, The Nature Conservancy, prairie groups, private citizens and watershed districts are just a few of the partnerships the team has developed.

"Working within the ecosystem approach concept is really beginning to pay off for our team," said Ecosystem Team Leader Barry Christenson. "We are beginning to find that we can work with groups we may have never considered working with before."

The Red River Valley is an example of a partnership that at one time may have been considered unlikely. Watershed districts throughout the valley and the ecosystem team's Wetland Restoration Sub-Committee are openly discussing and working through the issues of flooding, drainage and wetlands. Instead of working against each other, the partnership is finding they are able to work together to develop innovative ways to solve water problems. "After discussion, it turns out that we do have many common goals and can usually work something out that is beneficial to everyone," said Christenson. Another example of innovative thinking in the Red River Valley is the development and funding of a flood reduction model for the valley. After the valley's catastrophic flood of 1997, many federal, state and local agencies recognized the impact that a century of agricultural land modification and drainage had on downstream urban areas. They also recognized that new partnerships were essential.

The ecosystem team proposed a coalition including the U.S. Geological Survey, watershed districts and the Red River Valley Water Management Board to help fund research on flood storage potential. A first of its kind model was designated and readily funded by the new partners. Within a year, the U.S. Geological Survey had sites selected and monitors in place. The resulting information is expected to have national and international value.

Another project in the ecosystem is the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge is being developed to protect prairie areas spanning 85 counties in the states of Iowa and Minnesota.

The Prairie Restoration Sub-Committee is using their expertise to help identify suitable habitat for possible acquisition as part of the refuge. In addition, the project has provided the team with increased opportunities to develop partnerships among a wide range of groups and individuals. “The interest level in local citizens and communities is very high, they seem excited about working with us,” Christenson said. “Once we get the go-ahead to acquire our first piece of land and establish the refuge, things will really takeoff.” The battle against exotic species continues on land and in lakes, streams, and rivers. At many national wildlife refuges and wetland management districts, exotic plant species such as leafy spurge and Canada thistle were once solely controlled through mowing and the use of herbicides.

In the late 1980s, the Service began to encourage the use of alternatives to herbicides on federal property. Initially the public and county weed inspectors were skeptical. Today, refuges and waterfowl production areas within the ecosystem continue research and development, as well as serving as sites for local and state agencies to harvest leaf-eating beetles which help control plants such as purple loosestrife, leafy spurge and spotted knapweed without the use of herbicides.

Another exotic species issue ecosystem team members are working to address is the spread of zebra mussels in the ecosystem’s watersheds. Through the St. Croix River Task Force, the Service and partners keep a close watch on the presence of zebra mussels in the St. Croix, which also harbors the endangered winged mapleleaf mussel and Higgins’ eye pearlymussel.



Invasive species, such as zebra mussels, are edging out native species in some parts of the ecosystem.

Photo courtesy Center for Great Lakes and Aquatic Sciences

A species petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act is the Dakota skipper, a small prairie butterfly. However, thanks to the work of members of the team, pre-listing conservation has been undertaken to remove the need to list the skipper. In a cross-program effort, and in partnership with other resource agency and academic experts, the Service is developing a plan to manage the Dakota skipper populations at Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge.

One of the most active and effective team sub-committees focuses on prairie restoration. The Grassland Sub-Committee carries out work on national wildlife refuges and wetland management districts, as well as on private lands. Managers use prescribed burns to enhance prairies and restore native grasses.

Native prairie grass seeds are collected on Service lands and cleaned at Service facilities. In turn, the seed is made available to state and conservation agencies to restore waterfowl and other ground-nesting bird habitat.



The Service joined members of 51 state and federal agencies at February's Government Expo at Minnesota's Mall of America. More than 250,000 people toured exhibits during the weekend exposition.

-USFWS Photo by Dan Sobieck

A recently developed initiative of the team is to investigate the use of local seed sources for use in restoration. Because use of local genotypes may be important in the success of prairie restoration projects, the team is developing a set of protocols and recommendations for using local seed sources. It is hoped these guidelines will help field stations restore prairie areas to their historical significance.

Restoring wetland, upland, and woodland habitat is a goal common to all members of the ecosystem team. The team will continue to pursue all possible projects and partnerships which lead toward habitat restoration.

The Mississippi Headwaters/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem Team has already logged an impressive list of accomplishments, developed strong partnerships and had positive effects for the environment. "We are heading in the right direction," said Christenson. "I realize that we all have many priorities to juggle. And in order for the team to remain a priority, it has to provide concrete benefits to all of its members and partners. We have made some positive accomplishments, but we aren't there yet. We all need to continue working together and building partnership in order to reach that goal."



Refuge staffer Dave Azure helps two local students identify waterfowl during environmental education classes at Worthington Waterfowl Production Area.

-USFWS Photo by Steve Kallin

Summary of Fiscal Year 1999 Accomplishments

Two meetings were held in Fiscal Year 1999 for team members and invited guests of the Mississippi Headwaters and Tall Grass Prairie Ecosystem. Meetings in February and August 1999 were held at Minnesota Valley NWR. Critical discussion topics included comments from the Regional Director and Geographic Assistant Regional Director, Program Supervisors, Personnel and Law Enforcement. A review of ecosystem-related projects was completed for the Northern Tallgrass Prairie NWR, Minnesota River Focus Area, and the Red River Wetland Project. Other items that were discussed included fire management, private lands, GPRA, Regional Resource Conservation Priorities and ecosystem research needs.

Specific goals were developed by ecosystem team members as identified in the 1999 annual work plan for the Mississippi Headwaters and Tall Grass Prairie Ecosystem. Team goals directly relate to previously described objectives as defined in the action plan for the Mississippi Headwaters and Tall Grass Prairie Ecosystem. A four year study entitled "Relations of Runoff Processes to Wetlands and Land Uses Within Various Landscapes of the Red River of the North Basin" was initiated by the U.S. Geological Survey with support from the ecosystem team. The Red River of the North with attendant flood and natural resource issues remains a priority for the team.



Mary Soler, a wildlife biologist at Rydell NWR releases a mallard duck to the wild during an August waterfowl identification course at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center in Fergus Fall, Minn.

-USFWS Photo by Steve Kufrin

Efforts to restore native tallgrass prairie were focused in that portion of the Habitat Preservation Area that lies within the boundaries of the Minnesota River Basin. Preliminary estimates for restoration of upland habitat include 2,300 acres on and off of refuge lands. In addition to the upland restoration accomplishments, there were an estimated 2,000 acres of wetlands restored in important watersheds that contribute to the Mississippi, Iowa and Minnesota Rivers. Due to their locations within the watershed, the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and the Iowa River Corridor, are direct beneficiaries of these watershed improvement practices.

A focus group of knowledgeable representatives drafted an important Fiscal Year 1999 document to establish criteria for the use of seed from harvestable sources for tallgrass prairie restoration within the Mississippi Headwaters/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem. The five year goal is to use local ecotype seed to restore all Service prairie restoration and improvement projects on private and public land. Using local ecotype seed for Service private and public land restoration activities requires a commitment from team members and their staffs to develop sources of appropriate harvestable seed and work cooperatively to achieve

the ecotype seed goal.

Interim guidelines proposed in the draft document include:

- Use local ecotype seed instead of cultivars whenever and wherever possible.
- When planting a quarter-mile of a preserve-quality prairie, use seed from that prairie and/or topsoil from the disturbed area, if possible.
- Refrain from planting cultivars within one mile of high-quality or preserve-quality prairies.
- When planting within one mile of a high-quality prairie, use local ecotype seed. Select species present in the existing prairie.
- Maintain planting records indicating species and varieties planted, seed sources and date planted for all restoration.

Raising the profile of the Headwaters team was a priority in Fiscal Year 1999. Accomplishments by Headwater team members are among the finest in the Region and are regularly entered into the Regional Accomplishment Reporting System. An article highlighting the Headwaters team was published in the Fish and Wildlife News that described the activities and cooperation experienced through implementation of the ecosystem approach. In addition, a briefing of the Regional Directorate and other interested staff members was completed for the restoration of native prairie on and off Service lands by the Iowa Private Lands Office.

Mr. Barry Christenson, Refuge Manager at Union Slough NWR, became the new team leader of the Mississippi Headwaters/Tallgrass Prairie Ecosystem in August 1999. Barry has extensive knowledge of resource and land management issues and opportunities unique to the ecosystem. Mr. Charlie Blair, Refuge Manager at Sherburne NWR, is the former team leader and was an instrumental figure in elevating the Headwaters ecosystem.

Goals for Fiscal Year 2000

Lift the Conservation of Migratory Birds to a Higher Level

Species listed in the Region 3 Resource Conservation Priorities Plan will receive special attention in planning for the restoration of 1,500 acres of wetland and 2,000 acres of native prairie throughout the ecosystem.

Strengthen the Ecosystem Approach to Fish and Wildlife Conservation

Participate in the development and implementation of natural resource goals identified in the Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Work Group.

Refine and implement at ten Service field station's the Interim Guidelines for prairie restoration projects as established in the working group document "Iowa and Minnesota Local Ecotype Development for Prairie Lands".

Initiate discussion with federal, state and Tribal partners for at least one watershed improvement project within the St. Croix (e.g. Rush Lake) and Minnesota River (e.g. Bevins Creek) Watersheds. These areas represent two of the thirteen focus areas identified by the Midwest Natural Resources Committee.

Lead Efforts to Prevent the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Species

Field stations will continue to control and monitor invasive species. Zebra mussels, purple loosestrife, spotted knapweed, and leafy spurge are species of special concern in the ecosystem.

Set the Course for the Future of the Refuge System -

As recommended in WH 17 of the "Fulfilling the Promises" document, team members will support the development of a nationally coordinated approach for prioritizing lands and waters to support strategic growth of the refuge system. Specifically, opportunities for establishing parcels for the Northern Tallgrass Prairie NWR will be pursued in Fiscal Year 2000.

Fiscal Year 1999 Accomplishments

Forty-Acre Wetland Restored on Hennepin Park Lands

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

This multi-partner project restored a 40-acre wetland within the Murphy-Hanrehan Park in Scott County. The Service along with the Minnesota Waterfowl Association designed the project. Funding was provided by grants received from the Metropolitan Council and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Conservation Grant Program. Partners include: Minnesota Waterfowl Association, Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. 10/1/98

80-Acre Jailhouse Marsh Restored

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

The Service with partner funds from Minnesota Waterfowl Association, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and Metropolitan Council restored a 80-acre river marsh utilized by various wetland wildlife species. In addition, the parking lot was improved for recreational uses of this popular site. Partners include: Minnesota Waterfowl Association, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Metropolitan Council 10/1/98

Ducks Unlimited Aids Litchfield With Private Land Restorations

Litchfield Wetland Management District

Ducks Unlimited (DU) donated \$10,000 to the Litchfield Wetland Management District (WMD) for wetland restoration assistance on 1998 private land projects. The funding resulted in the restoration of over 86 acres of wetlands on 10 sites. By rounding out many wetland complexes, the restoration work will significantly increase migratory bird production next spring. DU has been a reliable partner and staunch supporter of the District's Private Lands Program. 10/1/98

Volunteer Hours Increase at Sherburne NWR

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

The biological and public use Programs at Sherburne NWR received the benefit of over 8,800 hours of volunteer service from 503 volunteers during fiscal year 1998, a 25% increase in hours from 1997. The biological Program benefited from 2,600 hours of service, 30% of the total volunteer hours, through activities that included waterfowl, eagle and crane surveys, purple loosestrife control, a bur oak study, and prairie seed collecting. The public use Program received 6,200 hours of volunteer service, 70% of the total volunteer hours, through activities that included litter pick-up, maintenance of ground, trails and signs, assisting with special events and providing wildlife interpretation. All volunteer activities are actively supported by the Friends of

Sherburne. Partners include: Friends of Sherburne NWR 10/1/98

Visitor Numbers Reach 87,000 at Sherburne NWR

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

Sherburne NWR received a total of nearly 87,000 visitors during fiscal year 1998, a 4% decrease from 90,000 visitors in 1997. The decrease is attributed primarily to the new RMIS "rollover" system for calculating totals. Refuge visitation numbers include 18,000 visitors to the wildlife drive, 15,000 visitors to hiking trails, 9,000 participants in hunting, fishing and trapping, and 3,000 participants in interpretive talks and tours. The information kiosks at refuge entry points and the interpretive signs along refuge trails were used by over 29,000 visitors. Nearly 5,000 students participated in environmental education activities on the refuge and over 4,000 visitors used the Old School House, which serves as the refuge visitor center. 10/1/98

Service Promotes Earth Steward Projects at Fergus Falls Middle School

Prairie Wetlands Learning Center

Teresa Jaskiewicz met with 350 students at Fergus Falls Middle School to discuss Earth Stewards projects. She helped the groups brainstorm and come up with a service project in which the students could participate. The projects increase awareness of local environmental problems among students, and enable them to become problem-solvers. 10/5/99

Union Slough NWR Adds 102 Acres

Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge

On October 6, 1998, Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge grew by more than 100 acres with the purchase of the Keith tract in Kossuth County, Iowa. Established in 1937, the Refuge was comprised of 2,850 acres of wetlands surrounded by intensively farmed private land. Beginning in the late 1980's, the Service began acquiring much needed upland buffers from willing sellers. Once restored, these buffers provide valuable nesting cover for waterfowl, increase species diversity, and improve the aesthetic quality of the Refuge. With the newly added Keith tract, the Refuge now covers more than 3,200 acres of wetlands, surrounding uplands, and bottomland forest in an area of Iowa dominated by row crop agriculture. 10/6/98

Detroit Lakes WMD Restores 32 Wetlands

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

Unseasonably warm weather October 12, 1998, allowed staff at the Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District to complete its restoration of 15.6 acres of wetlands in 32 drained basins on the Lofgren Waterfowl Production Area in Clay County, Minn. A Clemson leveler was also installed in the largest water control structure to keep it from being impacted by beaver activity. The wetlands were quickly filled with water as a result of a five-inch rainfall in late October. The wetlands and associated uplands will provide pairing and

nesting habitat for seven pairs of ducks and an estimated 56 ducklings will be produced annually on this portion of the WPA. 10/12/98

Minnesota Valley NWR Builds New Mail Data Base

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Judie Miller, using a source document developed by John Schomaker, Region 3, is attempting to develop a comprehensive database. The database will be used for mailings to advise the general public about the Comprehensive Conservation Plan. The secondary databases include the Friends, volunteers, environmental education, Junior Duck, Private Lands, and media and outreach databases. Research is being conducted on determining the feasibility of the plan. Some of the secondary databases which are in other software will need to be converted to FileMakerPro. 10/15/98

Native Seed Collecting on Sherburne NWR

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

Sherburne NWR expanded its native seed collecting Program in 1998. Utilizing a new volunteer seed collection program, approximately 60 pounds of uncleaned native forb seed was collected and cleaned by 35 volunteers donating 546 hours. This resulted in 24 pounds of clean seed from 26 native forb species, with an estimated minimum value of \$5,000. Through a cooperative effort with the Sherburne County Highway Department this seed was mixed with sand and spread along a 1/2 mile stretch

of the Wildlife Drive. The seeding was done in mid-November with the use of a sanding truck. Partners include: Sherburne NWR Volunteers, Sherburne County Highway Department 10/15/98

Sandhill Crane Fall Count Reaches All-time High

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

The Fall, 1998 survey of sandhill cranes recorded an all time high of 925 cranes roosting on Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge during Fiscal Year 1999. The record count helps establish the refuge as an important fall staging area for cranes in the midcontinent and helps incorporate a new Refuge public event, a morning crane watch, into the Refuge's annual fall Wildlife Festival held in celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week, scheduled for October 9, 1999. Partners include: St. Cloud State University and Refuge volunteers. 10/20/98

Audubon Society Officers Tour Litchfield WPA

Litchfield Wetland Management District

The Litchfield Wetland Management District (WMD) hosted a tour of the thousand acre Lovell Lake Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) for the officers of the Central Minnesota Audubon Society. Topics discussed began with WPA acquisition and management and expanded to include history, funding, easement types, public use, allowed WPA activities, endangered species, future goals, and numerous

others including, of course, birds. A package of numerous and various Service brochures was left with the president and will be routed through the rest of the staff. 10/24/98

Service Addresses College Students About Careers

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Each year, the University of Minnesota offers a class to help students learn more about fish and wildlife careers. The class is designed to assist them in making decisions relative to those careers. The Service, along with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and other private conservation groups provided the students with information regarding their respective missions and available positions. On October 27, 1998, Terry Schreiner from Minnesota Valley NWR gave a presentation to the class emphasizing the diversity of positions within the Service and the national and international scope of its mission. 10/27/98

Observation Skills Taught at Middle School by Jaskiewicz

PWLC/Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

An environmental observation skills activity was demonstrated to 350 seventh grade students and three of their teachers at the Fergus Falls Middle School by Prairie Wetlands Learning Center Park Ranger/Education Specialist Teresa Jaskiewicz. 11/3/98

Native Seed Cleaning Yields Nearly Five Tons

Litchfield Wetland Management District

Craig Lee and Steve Warner of the Litchfield Wetland Management District (WMD) spent a week at the Detroit Lakes WMD cleaning native prairie grass and forb seed harvested at Big Stone NWR. Litchfield ended up with almost 10,000 pounds of cleaned seed that will be used to seed many new Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) and improve habitat on some established WPAs. Litchfield would like to thank the staffs at Detroit Lakes WMD, Big Stone NWR and Sherburne NWR for the cooperation that made this success possible! 11/6/98

Science Students Learn About Service Careers

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Carlita Payne, Region 3 Ecological Services staff, and Judie Miller, Minnesota Valley NWR, participated in the "Back to Science Night" on Saturday, Nov. 6. Both individuals interfaced with science students who wished to learn about science related careers with the Service. Carlita spoke about opportunities with the Endangered Species Division as well as other related areas. Judie Miller talked about opportunities at a field station. A table top slide projector was used to illustrate potential aspects of jobs within the Service. In addition each student was given a folder/packet that contained information about the Service, volunteer opportunities, and information on student employment programs offered by the Service.

District Staff Participate in Morris Area High School Mentoring Program

Morris Wetland Management District

Two students from the Morris Area High School spent two days mentoring at the Morris Wetland Management District (WMD) office. Each student prepared a resume and letter of application, had a mock interview and followed along to learn about the job. The main objective is to expose the students to every day work at the Morris WMD and answer any questions the students may have about school, job opportunities, etc. 11/12/98

Prairie Wetlands Learning Center Invites Volunteers to a Day of Training

PWLC/Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

The second episode of The Prairie Wetlands Learning Center's "Earth Steward Show" asked volunteers to attend a day of training at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center on Nov. 21. There are numerous volunteer opportunities available at the Learning Center. An added treat was the local kindergarten class singing and imitating bird dances for the approximately 5,000 viewers of the local cable TV show. 11/17/98

Morris Elementary Science Projects

Morris Wetland Management District

Darrell Haugen, Kenton Moos and Chad Raitz from the Morris Wetland Management District (WMD) helped evaluate 5th grade students science projects. The three visited

with 15 kids and helped them develop their projects. Partners include: Morris Elementary, University of Minnesota at Morris West Central Experiment Station, USDA Soils Research Lab 11/18/98

Jaskiewicz Presents Food Chain to Fourth Graders

PWLC/Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Teresa Jaskiewicz presented the Food Chain/Predators and Prey to 78 fourth graders and three adults at Cleveland Elementary School in Fergus Falls. Students learned about how things are interwoven and connected to one another in the environment and their role in preserving that world.

11/19/98

Volunteer Training Day at Prairie Wetlands Learning Center

PWLC/Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Volunteer Training Day at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center had 35 adults attending the morning sessions for information on the various projects at the Center needing their talents. 11/21/98

Bird Education Program

Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge

Tamarac Refuge's Park Ranger, Betsy Beneke, along with refuge volunteers Bob and Joan Burke and Mary Wyatt, participated in the Detroit Lakes schools "Latchkey Program" in November. Presentations of 1-1/2 hours each were given at three elementary schools on bird education. Topics included migration, adaptations and feeding.

Forty-five children participated and all were happy to take home a pine cone suet feeder which they'd made as a craft project during the class. These presentations fulfilled a "homework" assignment given as part of the "Migratory Bird Education" course that Mary, Bob, Joan and Betsy attended in June through NCTC.

11/23/98

Minnesota Valley NWR staff complete firearms instructor training

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Terry Schreiner and Andy Mitzel attended a firearms instructor safety training certification program on Nov. 30, 1998. They will partner with other instructors from the Richfield VFW Program to offer a certification course here at the visitor center in the summer of 1999. The Program will provide a needed service to the community and assist in marketing the Young Waterfowlers Program. Firearms safety training is a requirement to qualify for the Young Waterfowlers Program. 11/30/98

Thief Bay Dike Rehabilitation Completed

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Rehabilitation of 7,881 linear feet of the Thief Bay Dike began in July 1998 and was completed on November 6. Final payment was sent on December 2. Rehabilitation included recoring and reshaping dike, tailgate spread 400 tons of Class 5 gravel, and delivery of 583 tons of Class III riprap. Construction was

completed by Frontier Construction Company (8A Contract) and paid for with flood monies. Seeding of the dike was completed by refuge staff. 12/2/98

Seed Planting Conducted on Gregory Landing Division

Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge, Annada Dist.

Maintenance Mechanic Sam Milazzo, Tractor Operator Alan Lagemann, and Temporary Biological Technician Land Mueller planted 87 acres of pin oak and pecan seeds on the Gregory Landing Division. The area that was planted was the newly-acquired Winkelman property on the east side of the Burlington-Northern railroad tracks. Approximately 250 lbs. of pecans and 400 lbs. of pin oaks were used to convert previously planted agricultural land to bottomland hardwood forest. 12/3/98

91,868 Pounds of Native Seed Processed at Detroit Lakes WMD

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

More than 91,800 pounds of native grass and forb seed was processed at the Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District (WMD) seed cleaning facility during the fall of 1998. The seed, which has an estimated retail value of \$2.6 million, will be used to establish 5,600 acres of habitat for nesting waterfowl and other wildlife throughout Minnesota and eastern North Dakota. An estimated 613 ducks will be produced annually in this habitat and numerous other

migratory and resident wildlife species will also benefit. These acres will provide additional acres for recreational activities such as hunting, trapping, bird watching, hiking, and cross-country skiing.

Partners include: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Cooperative Farmers
12/4/98

Jaskiewicz Visits Deep Portage Conservation Reserve
PWLC/Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Teresa Jaskiewicz, Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (PWLC) staff member, was among the eight chaperones and two Fergus Falls Middle School teachers that took 75 sixth graders to visit Deep Portage Conservation Reserve Dec. 3-4. She was able to experience first hand how Deep Portage handles it's residential Programs. This knowledge will be helpful as PWLC starts their residential operation. 12/4/98

Bill Peabody, Regional Director for Ducks Unlimited Retirement Banquet

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Bill Peabody, Regional Director for Ducks Unlimited in western Minnesota, retired in September 1998. On Dec. 5, a banquet was held in his honor at which time Jim Piehl, from the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District (WMD), presented Peabody with an award for his many years of work in conservation of natural resources. Proceeds from the fund-raiser that was held after the banquet will be used to build a new water control

structure at the Eng Lake Waterfowl Production Area in Douglas County. Eng Lake will be dedicated to Peabody in the spring of 1999. Partners include: Ducks Unlimited

12/5/98

Friends of the Rydell Refuge Host Tree Harvest

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

In accordance with the Rydell NWR's Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), the Friends of the Rydell Refuge hosted the first "Cut Your Own" spruce tree harvest on December 5. The harvest is part of a process to restore a portion of the Refuge back to the maple/basswood forest ecotype similar to what occurred there before the homesteading era. More than 115,000 spruce trees had been planted by the former owner of the refuge property. Spruce trees are not native to that part of Minnesota and the CCP calls for them to be replaced by native tree, shrub, and grassland species. Partners include: Friends of the Rydell Refuge
12/5/98

Bald Eagle Outreach

External Affairs

The National Foundation to Protect America's Eagles is interested in helping educate the American public about bald eagle recovery over the next few years. In coordination with Region 4's Recovery Coordinator and the Service's External Affairs Team Leader in Region 3, the Foundation will work to incorporate Service messages into its Public Service Announcements, Programs and educational materials at its

center in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. On Dec. 6, the Service was invited to observe and participate as the Foundation flew its education bird "Challenger" during the national anthem of the Vikings/Bears football game. We will be working together to enhance the public's emotional reactions to such an event, and use it as an educational opportunity. Partners include: Region 3 External Affairs, National Team Leader and Region 4 Bald Eagle Recovery Coordinator, Southeast team. 12/6/98

Annual Easement Compliance Flights Completed

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

The Fergus Falls Wetland Management District completed their annual easement compliance flight for Otter Tail, Douglas, Grant and Wilkin Counties. Eighteen potential easement violations were documented. 12/9/98

Minnesota Valley NWR Stages Major Cleanup

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Minnesota Valley NWR worked with its partners to clean up a five-acre parcel of land in Scott County. The area covered multiple ownerships including Service, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the Scott County Highway Department. The Department of Corrections, City of Shakopee and volunteers collected and piled the trash. Service, MNDOT, and Scott County crews loaded and hauled away seven dump truck

loads of trash. Partners include: Minnesota Departments of Transportation and Corrections, , Scott County Highway Department, City of Shakopee, Volunteers 12/10/98

Service Represented on Red River Basin Board

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Kevin Brennan from the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District (WMD) serves on the Fish/Wildlife and Outdoor Recreation Team for the Red River Basin Board. This was the fourth meeting attended, the next is scheduled for Jan. 22, 1999. The vision for the team is to restore and maintain an environment in the Red River Basin that provides for a quality human life, prosperous agriculture, flourishing communities, improved water quality, abundant wildlife and healthy habitats, holistic water management, and increased outdoor recreation development; all which support the future for compatible long term economic growth. There are also many goals and challenges which the team has identified. Kevin will continue to serve on the committee and strive for greater ecosystem management. Partners include: National Audubon Society, Manitoba Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Geological Survey, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Sierra Club 12/14/98

Stone Lake Restoration Project Begins

Litchfield Wetland Management District

Stone Lake is located approximately one mile northwest of the city of Litchfield, Minn. This 206 acre basin was partially drained by private ditches in 1907 and again in the early 1960s. Earlier efforts to restore the lake's hydrology failed. In 1997 the Service purchased 123 acres on the eastern portion of the lakebed and designated it the "Stone Lake Waterfowl Production Area." With cooperation from adjacent private landowners, the Service secured a permit from Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to install a water control structure on Service property in the drainage ditch at the outlet of the basin. Ducks Unlimited (DU) took interest in this high profile project and provided most of the funds for restoration construction. Project construction by DU's private contractor commenced on December 14, 1998 Partners include: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, neighboring landowners. 12/17/98

Draft of District's Public Use Plan Sent For Public Comment

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

The Fergus Falls Wetland Management District (WMD) sent out 40 copies of the draft Public Use Plan for public comments. The draft copies were sent to county commissioners, public libraries, vari-

ous other agencies and individuals through out the district. It was sent out December 17, 1998, and requested comments back by January 25, 1999.

12/17/98

Thirty-Three Species on Sherburne NWR Christmas Bird Count

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

Thirty-three species were observed during the Christmas Bird Count held on Dec. 19, 1998 at Sherburne NWR. The event, sponsored by the Friends of Sherburne, drew 12 participants for the dawn to dusk count. A golden eagle juvenile was the rarest siting of the day. Other highlights were trumpeter swans, wild turkeys and gadwall. The 2,326 birds sighted are a 36 percent increase over the 1,481 seen during the 1997 count. The increase may be due to the warm weather and the open water which kept many birds in the area longer. 12/19/98

Litchfield Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Benefits From Long Dry Fall

Litchfield Wetland Management District

The Litchfield Wetland Management District (WMD) Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program took full advantage of the unseasonably warm fall by restoring 337 acres of wetlands thus far in Fiscal Year 1999. Private lands staff revived 128 drained wetland basins on 38 different sites. Repair work was conducted on eight additional wetlands previously restored. 12/21/98

Moving Dirt on Newly Acquired WPAs

Litchfield Wetland Management District

Private lands staff rejuvenated 24 drained wetland basins on two recently acquired tracts, Boon Lake and Goose Lake Waterfowl Production Areas, this fall. The 52 acres of restored wetland complexes will be complimented by the sowing of native grass nesting cover next spring. Waterfowl, neo-tropical migrants, and resident wildlife will accrue outstanding production benefits from this prairie pothole restoration effort. 12/21/98

Litchfield's Law Enforcement Program Steps Up Efforts In FY99

Litchfield Wetland Management District

Refuge Officers Luke and Bell expanded compliance check activities during Minnesota's 1998 hunting seasons by contacting more than 200 hunters resulting in 11 Notice of Violations for Migratory Bird Treaty and Refuge Act offenses, including unplugged shotgun (1), unlawful camping (2), vehicle trespass (2), and construction of permanent deer stands (6) on District Waterfowl Production Areas. Numerous warnings were issued for trespassing, personal property abandonment, and possession of untagged migratory game birds, alcohol and toxic shot violations. Assistance was also rendered to state Conservation Officers involving cases of deer baiting and illegal burning of environmental contaminants. 12/28/98

Refuge Logs Successful Quarter For Environmental Education Program

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Approximately 4,160 visitors were reached through environmental education and interpretation Programs at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge from October - December 1998. Programs included pre-school, scout, educator workshops, and community events. The largest number of visitors reached was through National Wildlife Refuge Week events in October, where over 1,200 visitors were contacted. The refuge staff partnered with Education Strategies, from the Office of the Attorney General, to host four teacher workshops on environmental education. The refuge staff also partnered with the Mall of America to participate in the annual Ecommunities event. Ecommunities is a two-day event at the Mall focused on preserving our planet. Refuge staff hosted a booth displaying endangered species items and information.

Partners include: Dowling Urban Environmental Education Center (Partnership school), Broadway School (Partnership school), St. Thomas Academy (Partnership school), Education Strategies (Office of the Attorney General), Mall of America (Ecommunities). 12/31/98

Audubon's Christmas Bird Survey

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Staff members from the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District (WMD) assisted

with Audubon's Christmas Bird Survey. Forty-seven species were recorded in Fergus Falls survey route, while 37 species were recorded in the Battle Lake survey route. This annual survey records bird species and numbers in the area. 1/3/99

Wetland Partnership exceeds 6,000 acres to be rest

Wisconsin Private Lands Office

The Wisconsin Wetlands Partnership consisting of Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Wisconsin Waterfowl Association has achieved over 6,000 acres of wetlands and associated uplands to be restored in the state. These lands will be enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program as either 10 year, 30 year, or permanent easements. The projects are developed, and designed by three biologists working out of Service offices and supervised by Service private lands staff. Partners include: Natural Resources Conservation Service, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association 1/1/99

Contaminant Assessment Process (CAP) Reports

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

In conjunction with the Twin Cities Field Office, the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District (WMD) completed four Contaminant Assessment Process (CAP) reports for the following Waterfowl Production Area's: Rabbit River, Mud Lake, Spink and J.I. Case.

1/4/99

Litchfield WMD and Ducks Unlimited Complete Stone Lake Project

Litchfield Wetland Management District

On January 11, 1999, a project completion meeting was held between representatives of the Service, Ducks Unlimited and the private contractor at the site of the Stone Lake restoration project. The project involved installing a water control structure in a drainage ditch on the newly acquired Stone Lake Waterfowl Production Area. The structure will retain spring snowmelt and runoff and thereby restore 207 acres of prime wetland habitat. At the meeting representatives of the Service and Ducks Unlimited certified that the project had been completed by the contractor according to engineering plans and specifications. Partners include: Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Meeker County Chapter of Pheasants Forever. 1/11/99

Eagle Scout Project Benefits Prairie Wetlands Learning Center

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Local boy scout John Hjelle, to earn his eagle scout badge, coordinated the building of 12 benches to be used along the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center trail. The money for the project came from two sources: \$350 was donated in memory of William Deering and \$250 from "Respecteen Service Project" which is a scholarship fund from Lutheran Brotherhood Insurance. Seven scouts and three adult supervisors along with Larry Childs from the Wetland Management

District spent three evenings constructing the benches. Partners include: Seven boy scouts from Fergus Falls, the family of William Deering, Lutheran Brotherhood Insurance. 1/14/99

Environmental Education - Fergus Falls High School

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Jim Piehl gave a presentation on the Prairie Pothole Region to 35 students in the Fergus Falls High School Ecology class. Discussion included waterfowl ecology, predation, private lands programs and careers in wildlife management. 1/20/99

Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club Help Create Nesting Boxes

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Several staff members from Fergus Falls Wetland Management District along with the Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club helped cut out 350 wood duck boxes and 260 bluebird boxes. Eleven different club members helped as volunteers who tallied about 190 hours drilling holes and assembling the boxes. The wood duck boxes were assembled and will be put out by club members and others within the district. The bluebird houses were cut out and holes drilled, they will be given away as kits to: Greenwings 100, Schools 80, Prairie Wetlands Learning Center 50 and scouts 30. Since 1991 the Service has helped them build 2,366 wood duck and 2,000 bluebird boxes. 1/21/99

Fish Health Volunteers Recognized at Banquet

La Crosse Fish Health Center
Volunteers of the LaCrosse Fish Health Center were recognized on Jan. 22, 1999, at a Volunteer Banquet at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Resource Center in Onalaska, Wis. Offices hosting the banquet included the La Crosse District Office (Upper Mississippi Wildlife & Fish Refuge), La Crosse Fishery Resources Office and the La Crosse Fish Health Center. Janet Beitlich, La Crosse Fish Health Center, presented certificates and volunteer gifts to nine volunteers (four in attendance at banquet) for a total of 719 volunteer hours. Volunteers contributing the most hours included University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse undergraduate biology students, Brian Trewyn, Peggy Stelzig and Brian See. 1/22/99

Second Annual Wild Game Dinner Smashing Success

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Nearly 50 people either directly or indirectly involved with the waterfowl hunting programs met at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center to enjoy a fine wild game gourmet meal and celebrated the success of the programs and recognized efforts of those that made it happen. Partners include: Minnesota Waterfowl Association, Minnesota Duck and Goose Caller Association, Capable Partners, Burger Brothers Sporting Goods, Inc. 1/23/99

Environmental Education at Fergus Falls School

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Chuck Vuconich, Fergus Falls Wetland Management District, talked to approximately 80 students from three first grade classes at the Fergus Falls Elementary School. They talked about predators, birds and food habits of animals.

1/26/99

Morris WMD Staff Help Judge Morris School Science Fair

Morris Wetland Management District

On Jan.7,1999, Morris Wetland Management District staff members (Wayne Henderson, Judy Goulet, Darrell Haugen, and Kenton Moos) spent 4.5 hours at Morris Area High School Annual Science Fair. They interviewed 200 students (170 projects) and evaluated their projects to see if would advance to regional competition. Partners include: Morris Area High School, U.S. Department of Agriculture, University of Minnesota Morris Experiment Station, University of Minnesota-Morris

1/27/99

Memorandum of Understanding Signed with MWA, NRCS, and Service in Minnesota

Minnesota Private Lands Officer

Minnesota State Coordinator Lance Kuester spearheaded a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Minnesota Waterfowl Association (MWA) and the Natural Resources Conser-

vation Service (NRCS) to facilitate an expanded level of technical and financial assistance for implementation of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) sign-up. The Service and NRCS will actively promote U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) cost-shared wetland restoration on CRP lands, will provide wetland restoration technical assistance and will review engineering design and construction adequacy. The MWA will fund all or a significant portion of the wetland restoration costs that remain after USDA cost-share and land-owner incentive payments. Development of the MOU is responsive to recent policy changes in the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program yet defines a level of involvement by encouraging wetland restoration on CRP lands through other funding sources. 1/27/99

Wildlife Film Festival at Sherburne NWR

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

Over 100 people attended the 3 evenings of the Wildlife Film Festival held on January 14, 21 and 28 at Sherburne NWR. Each evening of films covered a wide variety of information on wildlife and habitat common to the Refuge. Topics included sandhill cranes, oak savanna, hawks, owls, deer and general wetland and upland wildlife. Four volunteers coordinated set-up and refreshments. Partners include: Friends of Sherburne NWR 1/28/99

Introduction to Fish Health Management Course

LaCrosse Fish Health Center

Staff of the LaCrosse, Fish Health Center, Onalaska Wis., in cooperation with the National Training Center, Shepherdstown, W. Va., presented the course, "Introduction to Fish Health Management," in Onalaska on Feb. 1-5, 1999. This was the 30th offering of the course by the Center. The fifteen students enrolled in the course learned microscope use, identification of parasitic, bacterial and viral pathogens, chemical calculation and drug treatments, sample shipping, and more. The course is intended as an introductory course for fish culturists, hatchery biologists, field biologists and others with an interest in fish health. Another course will be presented in March 1999. 2/1/99

West Otter Tail Crop and Forage Show

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Chuck Vuconich and Jim Piehl, Fergus Falls Wetland Management District, participated in the "West Otter Tail Crop and Forage Show" in Fergus Falls, Minn. The District staffers coordinated with Future Farmers of America (FFA) advisors from seven schools to put together and score contestants in a wildlife contest consisting of a 25-question written test and 48-question identification test of insects, fish, birds and mammals. Approximately 60 students took the test. The crop and forage show was attended by about 600 area producers and interested individuals. This was the

26th year of the show. Numerous seed companies, agricultural chemical and other representatives were there. Partners include: Future Farmers of America (FFA) advisors from seven schools in the surrounding area. 2/3/99

Grand Jury Indicts Illinois Wildlife Violator

Springfield Law Enforcement
Thomas E. Richards, 29, Springfield, Ill., was indicted by a federal Grand Jury for the unlawful sale of wild collected migratory waterfowl under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Richards was part of a covert investigation in 1994, but was never charged for the violations because he was convicted of armed robbery and was sent to prison. In 1998, Richards was paroled and came into possession of a live red-tail hawk that had been stolen hours before from the Henson-Robinson Zoo in Springfield, Ill. The two-count indictment charges Richards with a felony violation from 1994 (sale of ducks) and a Lacey Act violation for transporting and possessing a live red-tail hawk. A summons will be issued for Richards to appear in U.S. District Court, Central District of Illinois. Partners include: Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Springfield City Police, Springfield Park Police, U.S. Attorney Office, Springfield, Ill. 2/5/99

Helicopter Wolf Captures on Agassiz NWR

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

On February 4-6 1999, a helicopter crew was on site to

capture and radio collar wolves for the final year of a three year research project on Agassiz Refuge. Andreas Chavez, SCEP-MS student, and Eric Gese, Utah State University, were on site to direct and assist with the capture. Only four of the five wolves from the Golden Valley Pack were captured. The alpha female that was not captured had been previously collared. The alpha male was captured and collared. This animal had been captured last year, but his collar had been chewed off. The remaining three wolves were female pups. Extensive searches had been conducted from the air and ground to locate more wolves at Agassiz NWR and Thief Lake Wildlife Management Area. None were found. There had been two collared animals in the Elm Lake Pack, but both had died from mange, prior to the helicopter arriving. Other members in the pack had been observed with mange this past summer. It is assumed they may have died as well. One set of tracks was observed in the Elm Lake area. It is unknown if this animal was a sole survivor of the original Elm Lake Pack, a visitor from the Golden Valley Pack, or a disperser from another area. 2/6/99

Winter Fun Day at Sherburne NWR Attended by 800

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

Over 800 visitors and Regional Director Bill Hartwig attended the 5th annual Winter Fun Day at Sherburne NWR Saturday, Feb, 6, 1999. This family-

oriented event provided both youth and adults the opportunity to enjoy low impact winter outdoor recreational activities, learn about the adaptations of wildlife and plants to winter, and celebrate the 96th birthday of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Visitors were able to try out snowshoeing, cross country skiing, and skijoring, many for the first time. Volunteer wildlife interpreters provided interpretive information on the oak savanna and wetland habitats on the refuge for all participants in the horse drawn sleigh ride. The feature presentation on dog sledding drew over 225 and was followed by a drawing for 10 free dog sled rides. Other activities included demonstrations on winter camping and ice fishing, talks on wildlife in winter and winter bird feeding, kid's crafts and face painting. The day ended with a candlelight ski and bonfire at Sand Dunes State Forest which drew over 135 skiers. The event was co-sponsored by the refuge and the Friends of Sherburne and made possible with assistance from 65 Refuge volunteers and seven local businesses. Partners include: Friends of Sherburne NWR, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Forestry (Sand Dunes State Forest); Hennepin Parks (Eastman Nature Center); Fitzharris Ski and Sports; Wild Bird Crossing; REI, and 4-H. 2/6/99

Service Attends Youth Habitat Day in Alexandria, Minnesota

Jim Piehl of Fergus Falls Wetland Management District, set-up and tended a booth at the West Central Minnesota Youth Habitat Day in the Viking Mall, Alexandria, Minn. The goal of the event was to promote cooperative adult and youth involvement in habitat conservation and environmental education. Approximately 3,000 people toured the 25 exhibits, talking with exhibitors and picking up pamphlets, calenders, posters and other educational materials. They also built woodduck and bluebird houses to take home. Partners include: Douglas Soil and Water Conservation, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Deer Hunters Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, Woodduck Society, Department of Natural Resources Conservation Officers, Prairie Land Management, Lake Carlos Environmental Center, Minnesota Trappers Association, University of Minnesota Raptor Center, Douglas County Land Resources Management, Douglas County Lake Association, Viking Sportsmen, Ducks Unlimited, Loon Nesting Platforms, Pioneer Heritage Conservation Trust, Minnesota Waterfowl Association, The Bluebird Society and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. 2/6/99

Historian Contracting with Refuge

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

As part of Minnesota Valley's Comprehensive Conservation Plan process, Anthony Godfrey of U.S. West Research, Inc., delineated the work he and a local subcontractor will produce for the plan. It will consist of three volumes: background, management, and pertinent laws. There will be no field work involved with this project. 2/8/99

Save America's Treasures Grants Applied For

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Refuge staff applied for three grants totaling \$1.3 million to help preserve buildings and sites on the refuge eligible for the National Register. If awarded funding, nomination for the register will be required and matching funds will need to be secured. 2/8/99

Forty-Seven Percent of Woodduck Boxes Produce Ducks at Rydell NWR

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

A total of 132 woodduck boxes were available for use by waterfowl on the Rydell NWR. Of these, woodducks used 52 boxes for nesting; producing 624 ducklings. Ten boxes were used by hooded mergansers to produce 120 ducklings. Forty-one of the remaining boxes were used by squirrels and one box had a wasp nest. Volunteers help construct a number of the nesting boxes each year to replace the boxes that are no longer useable because they are damaged by weather or

deterioration. 2/15/99

Local Cub Scouts Learn About Bluebirds

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Chuck Vukonich from the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District met with eight cub scouts and seven adults to talk about bluebirds and to build bluebird houses. This scout group was from Underwood. 2/16/99

Agassiz Moose Population Continues Decline

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Regional Pilot Foster, Refuge Biologist Huschle, ROS Tischer and Tractor Operator VanEps completed the annual moose survey and mid-winter big game survey for Agassiz NWR and surrounding State Wildlife Management Areas. The cumulative results of both surveys indicate the moose population (about 50) has taken another large drop, 40 percent, from the previous two years. This is very disappointing as we had hoped that the population decline had leveled off at about 70 animals (1996 and 1997 survey results). Previous to that (1994 and 1995 survey results) we had hope the decline had leveled off at about 100 animals. The three year moose research on declining moose numbers is now in its last year. 2/17/99

Training for Minnesota Conservation Officers

St. Paul, Minnesota Law Enforcement

Service Special Agent Friberg and Refuge Officer Hjelmgren assisted the Minnesota Depart-

ment of Natural Resources with scenario training exercises for 15 Conservation Officer Cadets. The training incorporated officer safety and wildlife violation detection in both daylight and night time scenario training exercises.
2/17/99

Annual Deer Survey Shows Small Signs of Recovery
Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

On February 17, 1999 the annual mid-winter big game survey was flown by Regional Pilot Foster, Refuge Biologist Huschle and Tractor Operator VanEps. The area included Agassiz NWR and surrounding State Wildlife Management Areas. The deer population was recorded at 504, a 17 percent increase over last year's all-time low record of 432. Last year's mild winter no doubt contributed to this increase. This year's winter has been comparatively mild as well, with no deep snows. The refuge population goal is 1500 to 2000 deer. The deer herd had peaked at 3000 animals in 1992; however two extremely brutal winters, 1995-1996 and 1996-1997, took their toll on deer populations. Deer are the main prey species for resident wolves and also provide hunting opportunities for the general public. Hunting has been limited to bucks only during the last two years. 2/17/99

Pheasants Forever Assists Partners for Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration Project
Litchfield Wetland Management District

Through the cooperation of the Farm Services Agency and

a \$1,000 contribution from Pheasants Forever, the Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program constructed 18 earthen dams, reestablishing 16 wetlands totaling over 40 acres, on the Grant Johnson Farm in Stearns County. The basins will be shrouded by more than 60 acres of perennial grasses and trees planted this spring through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This habitat venture is a tremendous benefit for migratory birds, resident wildlife, and water quality within the Sauk River Watershed. Thanks to strong partner support, over 100 wetlands were restored in Stearns County last calendar year.
2/19/99

Minnesota Valley NWR Restores 47 Basins in First Quarter

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
Partners contributed approximately one half of the funds needed to restore and enhance more than 436 acres of critical waterfowl habitat on 25 sites located on private lands and refuge lands within the Minnesota Valley Wetland Management District. 2/22/99

Law Enforcement Clam Case Presented to Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Des Moines Law Enforcement Service
Special Agent Walt Kocal presented a program to 90 Iowa Conservation Officers on the Mississippi Valley Shell Company Investigation. The program summarized a four year law enforcement investigation into the illegal take, interstate sale, transportation

and export of freshwater mussel shells for use in the cultured pearl trade worldwide. The program was well received with many questions asked after the presentation.
2/24/99

Investigative Training Provided

Onalaska Law Enforcement
On February 24, 1999, Special Agent Gary Jagodzinski, Co-Case Agent for the Mississippi Valley Shell Investigation, provided a presentation on the investigation of the case to approximately 40 Conservation Officers from Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota during a two day conference in Breckinridge, Minnesota. The presentation was also attended by the Chief Warden in North Dakota and the Director of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. The officers were provided with information on investigative strategy and prosecutorial outcome of the investigation. 2/24/99

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District Staffs Booth at Volunteer Fair

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District
A booth on volunteer opportunities available at the Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District was staffed during the annual Detroit Lakes Volunteer Expo on February 27. An estimated 500 people visited the Expo and viewed the displays. Several people expressed interest in volunteering on the District. 2/27/99

Landscape Fair at Minnesota Valley NWR Draws a Crowd

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

The general public was invited to walk through the many displays set-up by various landscape designers, lawn care services and by organizations such as the Native Plant Society. Master Gardeners were on hand to provide growing tips. In addition three special workshops were held: 1) creating backyard prairies, 2) establishing woodland gardens, and 3) native plant identification. The workshops were videotaped by Bloomington Cable TV and by KSTP television. 2/27/99

Outreach: Status of Elm Lake Wolf Pack, Agassiz NWR

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Three newspaper interviews; Grand Forks Herald and Associated Press (2/18/99), Brainerd Paper (2/24/99); and one radio interview, KKCQ107.1, Fosston (3/1/99) were given on the status of the wolf research. Of specific interest was the fatal outcome of two radio collared wolves from the Elm Lake Pack that died from mange. Also, it appears that all members of this pack may be dead. During a recent helicopter capture attempt, only tracks of one animal were found in the area. This could be a pack survivor, an animal from a neighboring pack or a dispersed animal from another area. From a scientific standpoint, the documentation of death by mange was significant. There are very few documented cases of mange causing death. 3/1/99

Refuge Initiates Communication With Local Hotels

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Minnesota Valley NWR is an urban refuge surrounded by the tourism industry. It is five minutes away from the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport and many hotels are near the Visitor Center. The refuge wants to encourage the hotel guests to become better acquainted with our mission and our facility. The refuge intends to develop a communication plan in 1999 with at least four of the nearby hotels. The nearby Hilton hotel represents the first of these initiatives. 2/24/99

Earth Stewards Project Gets Students On Web, TV

PWLC/ Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Ten children and two adults participated in working on the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center website and taping the monthly TV show for a local cable station. The estimated audience of the show, which is broadcast twice weekly every month, is 4,200. The monthly TV show starring Eartha Steward (aka Teresa Jaskiewicz) was taped and involved 10 students participating in an after-school Program. These students also worked on the PWLC web page. Both the TV show and the web page are designed to heighten people's interest in the environment. 2/30/99

Fourth Graders Learn About a Bird's Winter Life

PWLC/ Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Sixty fourth-graders and four adults came to the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center to learn about winter on the prairie. Teaching was done by Teresa Jaskiewicz and Tim Bodeen. A fourth grade class (60 students) from Adam Elementary School visited the PWLC and were taught by Teresa Jaskiewicz and Tim Bodeen about what happens on the prairie during the winter. They watched a video entitled "Birds in Winter." 2/30/99

Eagle Dies After Being Hit By Car Near Detroit Lakes WMD

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

On March 2, 1999, Refuge staff received a report of an eagle being injured after being hit by a car in the vicinity of Floyd Lake near Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. Wildlife Biologist Les Peterson located the injured adult bald eagle, which was seriously traumatized and could not fly or walk. The bird died before it could be transported to the Raptor Center. The bird's body was sent to the Eagle Repository in Colorado for disposition. 3/2/99

Annual Congressional Staff Visits

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

On February 24, 1999, Margaret Anderson visited with Mark Anderson of Senator Wellstone's St. Paul, Minn. Office to bring him up-to-date on refuge events, issues. Moose, wolves, flooding, and

flood easements by watershed districts were discussed. Refuge Manager Anderson also stopped in to leave additional information for Maynard Pick, Congressman Peterson's Water Representative, Waite Park, Minn. Mr. Pick was out, but Anderson had discussed issues listed above at the MNTWS annual meeting Feb. 4, 1999. All Congressional staff people in the district have been placed on the MNTWS mailing list. This year's theme was "Partnering," and Mr. Pick was interested to see how this might apply in Red River Basin. On March 3, 1999, Anderson contacted, by phone, Deb Hams, Congressman Peterson's field rep in Red Lake Falls, regarding a possible meeting on March 4. Due to inclement weather, Anderson was unable to get to the office when Ms. Hams was in. Another meeting will be scheduled. Senator Grams' office will be scheduled with next meeting in Regional Office. 3/4/99

Congressional Meetings on the Northern Tallgrass Prairie NWR

External Affairs

Ron Cole, Project Leader for the Northern Tallgrass Prairie NWR, and Jane West, Region 3 Intergovernmental Affairs Specialist, met with staff from seven Minnesota congressional offices on March 4, 1999. Jane and Ron provided the congressional staff with an update on recent activities in the project area. A Project Update brochure was prepared for the briefings. The following congressional offices were involved in the briefings: Repre-

sentative Gutnecht (R-1st MN), Senator Grams (R MN), Representative Luther (D-6th MN), Representative Ramstad (R-3rd MN), Representative Peterson (D-7th MN), Representative Vento (D-4th MN), and Senator Wellstone (D MN). 3/4/99

150 Seventh Graders Experience Winter Life at Prairie Wetlands Learning Center

One-hundred and fifty seventh graders from area schools learned about winters on the prairie during a day at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center March 5, 1999. Three groups of fifty students toured the building, drilled holes in the ice to sample pond water under microscopes, and examined the ground in the Oak Savanna for animal tracks. 3/5/99

Northern Tallgrass Prairie Bird Point Count Inventory

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

The Fergus Falls Northern Tallgrass Prairie Bird Point Count numbers for 1998 have been tallied. This survey has been done for the past six years to document the abundance and diversity of bird species associated with the northern tallgrass prairie of western Minnesota. Thirteen separate fields of native tallgrass prairie found on Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) and The Nature Conservancy property ranging in size from 30 to 320 acres were surveyed in 1998. Sixty-five species were observed. As with other years, savannah sparrows and bobolinks were the most common species on the large prairie tracts. Sedge

wren numbers remained about the same. LeConte's sparrows seemed more numerous than ever, possibly due to the wetter than average conditions. Noteworthy was the presence of five Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrows. These birds are typically found in the Polk-Marshall-Kittson area of northwestern Minn. 3/5/99

Service Gives Presentation to Minnesota Conservation Corps

Litchfield Wetland Management District

On March 4, 1999, ROS Steve Erickson gave three presentations to eighty new recruits of the Minnesota Conservation Corps (MCC). The MCC is a seasonal education/work experience program of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for young adults who are interested in careers in the field of natural resources. Invited to speak as part of a "careers workshop" segment of a week-long orientation and training session for the new recruits, Erickson gave information about the Service including its history, structure, responsibilities, activities, programs and career opportunities. The Student Career Experience and Student Temporary Employment Programs were highlighted. The MCC orientation was held at the YMCA's Camp Ihdihipi near Loretto, Minn. 3/4/99

International Migratory Bird Day Event Planned for Minnesota's Como Zoo

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Service staff met with Cindy Fowler of the Como Zoo to set the agenda for this year's International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) festivities to be held for the fourth year at Como on Saturday, May 8th. This year's observance will be bigger and better than ever. Charlie Maguire, "The Singing Ranger" from the National Park Service has committed to two appearances for the day. There will be exhibitors for the first time ever in addition to "Certificates of Survival," poster awards to "winning warblers," and migration games. 3/7/99

Refuge Wolf Outreach: Staff Interviewed for Newspaper, Magazine Articles

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Gary Huschle was interviewed on March 5, by Brad Dokken, Grand Forks Herald. The interview covered clarification of mange impact on wolf populations and discussion of recent annual deer survey results. Two articles resulted in the Sunday Outdoor Regional Section of the paper. M. Anderson was interviewed by Hunter Magazine on March 8, regarding the Adopt-A-Moose-Minnesota Moose Mystery Website. 3/8/99

Agents Conduct Training for Minnesota DNR Level Two Officers

St. Paul, Minnesota Law Enforcement

Service Special Agent Friberg conducted a four hour talk on Service wildlife laws for Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Level 2 Officers. The instruction included a brief overview of the Lacey Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, National Wildlife Refuge Act, Eagle Act, Airborne Hunting Act, and the Endangered Species Act. These officers mainly work at the large State Wildlife Management Areas throughout the state. 3/9/99

Nesting Use Up in District's Hen House Program

Litchfield Wetland Management District

Litchfield Wetland Management District's predator management program annually maintains 160 dual cylinder hen house structures pole mounted in district Waterfowl Production Area wetlands for nesting waterfowl. Nesting use jumped from 33-49 percent and hatching success climbed 20-25 percent between 1997 and 1998. Abandonment was very high representing most nest failures. Placement strategy has entailed moving, adding to, and clumping structures in traditionally successful portions of wetlands to capture natal female returns. All nests surveyed were mallards except one blue-winged teal. 3/10/99

Minnesota Wetland Management Districts Implement GIS

Windom Wetland Management District

The first phase of implementing a Geographic Information System (GIS) for Minnesota Wetland Management Districts (WMD) is nearly completed. All Wetland Management Districts have received the system, training and Digital Orthoquads (DOQs) covering all lands within their District. Four of the five WMDs have entered approximately 90 percent of their Waterfowl Production Area ownership boundaries. Easement boundary and habitat layers will be entered next along with field accomplishments for 1999. System enhancement, training and support will continue to be provided by the Windom WMD. 3/11/99

New Waterfowl Production Area Purchased

Windom Wetland Management District

The Windom Wetland Management District recently purchased the 240 acre Stallkamp tract located in the upper portion of the Blue Earth River Watershed in western Freeborn County, Minn. Approximately 60 acres of wetlands will be restored for the benefit of waterfowl and other migratory birds, as well as provide water quality and flood water retention benefits. 3/11/99

Duck Habitat Days a Success

Windom Wetland Management District

An estimated 250 people attended Duck Habitat Days,

which was sponsored by the Farimont Chapter of the Minnesota Waterfowl Association and held on February 20 with assistance from the Windom Wetland Management District. Information about Service Habitat Conservation Programs was provided by staff who were present to answer questions. Approximately 150 wood duck nest boxes were constructed and distributed to area youth.

3/11/99

Habitat Restored in the Heron Lake Watershed

Windom Wetland Management District

In recent years, 90 acres of wetlands, 188 acres of uplands and 10 miles of stream bank were restored within the Heron Lake Watershed Restoration Project using \$24,000 of Flood Funds provided through Cooperative Agreements with the Windom Wetland Management District. The Heron Lake Watershed District, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and 26 landowners cooperated in this effort by contributing an additional \$43,000. Projects were designed to provide waterfowl, water quality and flood retention benefits. 3/11/99

Sherburne NWR Honors 503 Volunteers at Dinner

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

Sherburne NWR recognized 503 volunteers on March 11, for their contribution of over 8,800 hours of service to the Refuge during 1998 at an awards dinner prepared by Refuge staff. Within this group were 133 regular volunteers

who participated in activities that included prairie seed collecting, wildlife interpretation, adopt-a-trail, adopt-a-fishing area, assistance with special events and many other public use, resource, and clerical projects. The five volunteer groups, Elk River ALC, St. Cloud State University Biology Department, Sentencing To Service, Telephone Pioneers of America and Silver Lakers 4-H, accomplished resource surveys, kiosk maintenance, bridge building and a variety of other special projects.

Thirteen groups and families participated in the Adopt-a-Road Program. Robin DeLong of Princeton, Minn., received the 1998 Volunteer of the Year award for her contribution of over 300 hours of service during the past year through activities that included coordination of the wildlife film festival, team leader for a prairie seed collecting group, monitor for the oak savanna study, wildlife interpretation and much more. The dinner, held jointly with Crane Meadows NWR, was attended by 115 individuals. The 8,866 hours of service donated by Sherburne NWR volunteers during 1998 is a 25 percent increase from that of 1997.

Partners include: Friends of Sherburne NWR, Boy Scouts of America, University of Minnesota Sherburne County Extension 4-H, St. Cloud State University Biology Department, Sherburne County Highway Department, Erickson Asphalt, Sherburne County Sheriff's Department (Sentencing To Service), Elk

River School District, Lakeview Care Center, Pheasants Forever, U.S. West Telephone Pioneers of America.

3/11/99

Crane Meadows NWR Honors 107 Volunteers

Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge

Crane Meadows NWR honored 107 volunteers for 601 hours of service to the Refuge during 1998 at a recognition dinner on March 11 held jointly with Sherburne NWR and prepared by Refuge staff. Within this group, 15 regular volunteers were involved in activities that included grooming the cross-country ski trail, plowing snow, planting wildlife food plots, mowing and office cleaning. The three volunteer groups, Little Fall High School Natural Resource Class, St. Cloud State University Biology Department, and St. Cloud Area Learning Center, were involved in projects that included monitoring kestrel, bluebird, and wood duck boxes, waterfowl surveys, sandhill crane nest surveys and fence removal. The 601 hours of service contributed by Crane Meadows NWR volunteers during 1998 is a 21 percent increase from the 472 hours donated in 1997. 3/11/99

Trappers Donate Mammal Pelts For Educational Displays at Rydell NWR

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

The Minnesota Trappers Association donated a set of mammal pelts to Rydell National Wildlife Refuge March 12, 1999, for use in the

Continued next page.

Refuge's educational displays. Fifteen tanned pelts, representing species from ermine to timber wolf, were donated to the refuge. The pelts will be used for educational displays in the Refuge visitors center. The pelts, valued at about \$1,000, will become displays that illustrate life history and distribution of each species, and will be an excellent addition to the Visitor Center. Partners include: Minnesota Trappers Association. 3/12/99

Service Staff Teach Fire Training at University of Minnesota-Crookston
Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Tom Zellmer, Fire Management Officer and Larry Anderson, Forestry Technician, Agassiz NWR, Biological Technician Larry Hanson, Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District; and Ross Heir, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, put on a 2.5 day course of Fire Training (S-130 and S-190) on the University of Minnesota - Crookston Campus. The course ran from March 12-14, 1999. About 40 college students and four Refuge Volunteers took the Course. Refuge volunteers were Marci Clark, Terry Barnett, Scott Graham, and Dave Grandmaison. This was an educational outreach effort with a local college, as well as an effort to provide a potential pool of trained summer hires. A fire truck with a slip on pumper, a variety of hand tools and water pumping units were on hand for demonstrations and hands-on training. Hose lays and water application were also demon-

strated and tested. 3/14/99

Detroit Lakes Coordinates Interagency Fire Activities For White Earth Reservation

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

Detroit Lakes WMD staff met with tribal and state agencies March 18, 1999, to coordinate prescribed fire and wildfire suppression activities within the White Earth Reservation. Plans of attack, equipment sharing and logistical planning were discussed. Attending agencies included the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources-Forestry, Enforcement, and Wildlife divisions; White Earth Tribe-Forestry, Conservation, and Biology, divisions; Bureau of Indian Affairs; Tamarac NWR and the Twin Lakes Fire Department. A senior level Minnesota DNR Forester described the meeting as the best example of interagency cooperation he had ever experienced. 3/18/99

Artist Jim Hautman Part of Partnership to Restore Wetlands on Detroit Lakes WMD Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District Jim Hautman, wildlife artist and three-time winner of the national Duck Stamp Contest, will help fund a planned wetland restoration at the Matter Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) of the Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District in Becker County, Minn. Mr. Hautman will partner with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Minnesota Waterfowl Association and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to help fund the restorations,

scheduled for next spring. Hautman will direct funds raised during the 1999 Federal Duck Stamp Classic held on July 9 at the Minnesota Hunt Club in Prior Lake, Minn. Other funding partners include the Minnesota Waterfowl Association, North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and the Minnesota DNR. Approximately 80 wetlands amounting to 120 acres and 280 acres of associated prairie grasslands will be restored on the WPA. The uplands will be seeded during the spring of 2000 and the wetlands are expected to be restored over a three to five year period. Partners include: North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Minnesota Waterfowl Association, Minnesota DNR, Jim and Dorthy Hautman. 3/19/99

Interagency Flood Reduction Task Force

Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge

The eight-interagency Red River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Workgroup completed phase I of the flood damage mediation process begun in 1997. The Crookston meeting is a review of that work, and the first step of a pioneering initiative to build consensus and aid in the decision making process for flood damage reduction and natural resource enhancement. The meeting represented a major step forward for old antagonists, with new cooperative attitudes demonstrated by many represented agency personnel. Multi-agency Watershed District

Workgroups were formed and began the review of issues, alternatives and solutions.
3/19/99

Service's Teresa Jaskiewicz Promotes Marsh Madness on Television

Prairie Wetlands Learning Center

Teresa Jaskiewicz of the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (PWLC) appeared on a local cable television program, "Community Corner" in March to promote the upcoming "Marsh Madness" event at the PWLC. Jaskiewicz also demonstrated the construction of Wood duck houses. The program aired three times, reaching approximately 4,700 people.
3/23/99

U.S. Geological Survey Red River Wetland Study Started
Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) personnel were on Hamden Slough NWR, March 24 and 25, to begin a \$130,000 study titled: "Relations of Water Balance Processes on Wetlands and Small Watersheds in the Red River of The North Basin." The USGS will monitor water levels and flows and determine the precipitation runoff effects of wetlands and uplands. North Dakota State University's ground water study of Bisson Lake is also near completion and that data will be used in USGS's water balance equations. As the USGS's data and results become available, it will be made accessible to the new inter-agency workgroups, being set up in the nine Watershed Districts in Minnesota's Red

River Basin. 3/25/99

Region 3 Annual Report Completed

External Affairs

The Region 3 Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1998 is complete. The comprehensive report details the activities and accomplishments of the Region's employees by Resource Programs and Ecosystem teams. The 308-page annual report contains summary information for each team/program as well as more than 1,000 individual reports submitted through the accomplishment reporting system throughout Fiscal Year 1998. The Annual Report will be available to all members of Region 3 via the Service Home Page. Chapters will be posted to the Region 3 Web page in portable document format (.pdf) and can be easily viewed and downloaded. A chapter on the Midwest Natural Resources Group is included.
3/26/99

Donation of 25 Bluebird Boxes for Prairie Park
Litchfield Wetland Management District

Volunteer Chuck Lee, a welder from St. Cloud, Minn., makes bluebird nest boxes from discarded wooden pallets as a hobby. He has donated boxes for Litchfield Wetland Management District (WMD) Waterfowl Production Areas in the past and has now donated 25 more for the City of Litchfield's Prairie Park. The boxes will be placed by local scout troops. The WMD is providing assistance in the management of the 26 acre park that has been seeded with native tallgrasses

and flowers. 3/28/99

Fourth Graders Learn Resource Topics at Multi-County Water Festival

Windom Wetland Management District

Staff and volunteers from the Windom Wetland Management District assisted with the Children's Water Festival, March 16. The event is sponsored by the Brown-Nicollet-Cottonwood Water Quality Board. The purpose of the Festival is to provide youth and classroom teachers with an innovative, quality, hands-on learning opportunity highlighting the relationship and interdependence of water to all living things. Over 1,200 4th grade students attended and 500 teachers attended presentations by Windom Wetland Management District which focused on wetland invertebrates and the food web.
3/30/99

Girl Scout Retreat Brings 110 Visitors to the PWLC

PWLC/ Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

The Prairie Wetlands Learning Center hosted two groups (a total of 90 students and 20 adults) of Girl Scouts March 12-13, 1999. Teresa Jaskiewicz led the group, bringing them on tours where they did a variety of educational activities. Ninety Girl Scouts visited the PWLC on March 12 and 13 with one group spending the night. Jaskiewicz served as their guide and led them through a variety of educational activities including:

collecting water samples and studying them under a microscope, studying animal tracks, and learning about the prairie Ecosystem. These allowed the girls to experience science and explore the world around them. 3/30/99

150 Seventh Grade Students Experience the PWLC

PWLC/ Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

One-hundred and fifty seventh graders visited the learning center on March 5. They received an educational tour of the building and completed outside experiments. Three groups of fifty seventh graders spent 1.5 hours at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center on March 5. They received a building tour, helped drill holes in the ice, sampled pond water to examine under microscopes, and examined the ground in the Oak Savanna for animal tracks. The purpose was to teach the students about winter life at the learning center. They were led by Teresa Jaskiewicz. 3/30/99

Service Planners Meet at PWLC

PWLC/ Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

March 2-4, 1999, Seventy adults attended a three-day meeting of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Comprehensive Conservation Plan at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Comprehensive Conservation Plan used the PWLC facilities as a meeting place for three days, from March 2 to March 4. 3/30/99

Marsh Madness Hits The Radio Waves

PWLC/ Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Teresa Jaskiewicz did a radio spot to promote the center's "Marsh Madness" event. The radio show reached an estimated 14,000 people. Teresa Jaskiewicz appeared on a local radio station to talk about the upcoming "Marsh Madness" event at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center. A three-minute spot allowed her to explain what activities would take place at the event and how people can get involved. An estimated 14,000 people heard the message 3/30/99

Sportsmen's Club Recognized for Assistance

Windom Wetland Management District

Members of the Cottonwood County Game and Fish Protective League were recognized by the Windom Wetland Management District during a Spring Hunting Forum held on March 25, for assistance in acquiring the Blixeth WPA and restoring wetlands. The club contributed \$8,600 to restore wetlands and extend the Purchase Agreement with the previous landowner. This enabled the eventual fee purchase of this 160-acre unit. 3/30/99

Sportsmen's Clubs Help Increase Mallards Numbers

Windom Wetland Management District

Three local sportsmen's clubs recently donated a total of \$1,300 to help increase mallard production in the Windom Wetland Management District through the use of over-water nest baskets with tepee style cover-tops. The fiberglass, wicker-like tops are

designed to be more attractive to nesting hens and protect them from avian predators. Use of this system in South Dakota has successfully shown that these baskets are as effective as the cylinder shaped hen house but may require less maintenance. The District will tryout a total of 20 structures on WPAs and private lands during the 1999 nesting season. Partners include: Cottonwood County Game and Fish League, Ducks Unlimited, North Heron Lake Game Producers 3/30/99
Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Troy Boschee and Brett Tully from the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District placed 222 nesting cylinders on waterfowl production area's throughout the district. 3/30/99

Service Acquires 120 Acres from U.S. Department of Agriculture

Litchfield Wetland Management District

More than a decade after initial screening by District staff, two properties have been fee title transferred from the USDA Farm Service Agency to the Service. The two properties have been owned by the Department of Agriculture since 1983 and 1985, respectively. The properties were marginal from an agricultural production standpoint but will be valuable additions to the WPA system. The Winter property consists of 120 acres in Meeker County and the Mellies property is 43 acres in Renville County. Persistence and flexibility were necessary attributes of the various Service personnel involved in shepherding these

properties into the System. There have been three Farm Bills, numerous rule and policy changes, and a host of changes in the players involved. In addition to the Litchfield staff, two Service employees were key in making the transfer a reality. Lance Kuester of St. Cloud Private Lands and Greg Brown (ARW-Private Lands). Both expended considerable time and energy to ensure the transfers occurred. Both properties contain numerous wetlands and upland habitat. The uplands on the Mellies property were previously restored by Litchfield staff under a caretaker agreement. Much of the upland habitat and a few small wetlands on the Winter Tract are still in need of restoration. 3/30/99

Minnesota Valley NWR Hosts Junior Duck Stamp Competition

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Approximately 800 entries from Minnesota Students in grades K-13 were received for this year's competition which was held on March 30. The judges for the competition included Robert Hautman, wildlife artist and past winner of the Federal Duck Stamp Contest, Rollie Brandt, artist, John Blankenship, assistant regional director, Region 3, Jeff Hedtke, Board of Water and Soil Resources, and Chris Niskanen, outdoors editor, St. Paul Pioneer Press. Barb Pardo, Joint Venture coordinator, served as advisor to the judges.. Sara Stack from North High School, St. Paul, won "Best-of-Show" with her painting of a pair of lesser

scaup done in acrylic. The competition was held at the National Guard Armory in Bloomington, hosted by Minnesota Valley NWR staff and six volunteers. This year's competition was open to the public for the first time. Several parents, students, and teachers were on hand to observe the contest. They commented favorably on how well the contest was run. KARE 11 television filmed the contest and aired a segment on the 6 p.m. news. The city of Bloomington Cable TV also videotaped the contest to be used for future city Programming this spring. 3/30/99

Minnesota Valley Hosts CCP Briefing

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

As part of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) process, Minnesota Valley NWR held an open house for non-profit and Natural Resource agencies on March 31. Forty-eight representatives from various agencies toured the interactive displays, provided comments, and discussed their ideas for Minnesota Valley NWR's future with refuge staff and staff from the Department of Natural Resources. 3/30/99

Minnesota Valley NWR Reaches Public Through Education

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

A total of 73 environmental education and interpretive programs reached 2,491 visitors at Minnesota Valley NWR during the second quarter of Fiscal Year 1999. Environ-

mental education Programming, including preschool and scout programs, reached 2,158 students. Three educator workshops were hosted reaching 125 teachers. Staff- and volunteer-led interpretive programs reached 377 visitors. Eight staff participated in the Government Expo at the Mall of America and reach 250,000 mall visitors. Minnesota Valley NWR offers programs for preschool children and also has environmental education units for grades 4-6 and grades 7-12. Minnesota Valley NWR also has interactive programs designed for Girl and Boy Scouts. These Programs may contribute toward badges in areas related to the environment, wildlife, plants and outdoor skills. In addition, several workshops are available for educators. 3/30/99

Marsh Madness Hits PWLC *PWLC/ Fergus Falls Wetland Management District*

Marsh Madness was held at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, attracting 100 people (60 adults and 40 students). Marsh Madness was an event designed to draw people out from the community to the PWLC to learn about what happens in a wetland during spring. Displays and exhibits included: how to build wood duck houses, tips for keeping a journal, information about lyme disease, waterfowl identification, aquatic life, wetland restoration, Minnesota frog identification, creating habitat for frogs and toads, and more. One-hundred people came out to celebrate the madness and learn more about the environment. 3/30/99

Detroit Lakes District Staff Interviewed on KDLM Radio

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

Detroit Lakes Wetland Manager Rick Julian and staffer Jason Barker were interviewed by KDLM Radio Reporter Dan Ochsner April 9, 1999, about the District's upcoming prescribed burning program and other activities. A major topic of discussion was "How is the Service different from the Minnesota DNR".
4/9/99

Audubon Society Meeting

Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge-Brussels District

Refuge Manager Phillips and Biological Technician Heilhecker attended the Illinois Audubon Society - Great Rivers Chapter meeting April 6, in Alton, IL. Biological Technician Heilhecker spoke to 14 members on vegetation problems in the refuge's moist soil units. Topics included which species are undesirable, why and management techniques for controlling problem plants. Manager Phillips described moist soil management and answered questions regarding the future management of the refuge. 4/30/99

Litchfield Assists with Management of Prairie Park

Litchfield Wetland Management District

The City of Litchfield received a gift of 26 acres to their park system. The area has been seeded to native tallgrass prairie grasses (18 species) and forbs (70 species). The Litchfield Wetland Management District has agreed to assist in the management of

this city park and has donated bluebird boxes. Staff conducted a prescribed burn in the spring and plan got community involvement in harvesting forb seed during the summer/fall. The seed will be used to restore prairie on the nearby Stone Lake WPA. 4/30/99

Minnesota Waterfowl Association Symposium

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Approximately 125 professionals and other individuals attended the waterfowl symposium held at the Best Western in Fergus Falls. The symposium was sponsored by Minnesota Waterfowl Association. Jim Piehl from the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District also gave a presentation on the Stang Lake wetland restoration project and Kevin Brennan and Maynard Pick had lead discussions on the farm economy as well as a variety of natural resource issues.
4/30/99

Refuge Manager Phillips Featured on Radio Program

Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge - Brussels District

Refuge Manager Phillips appeared on Outdoors with Larry Reid, April 18, 1999. The hour long show is broadcast on WBGZ AM 1570 from Alton, Ill., just across the river from the greater St. Louis metropolitan area. John Gillespie, President of the Migratory Waterfowl Hunters, Inc. was also a guest on the show. Phillips and Gillespie discussed the two Corps of Engineers sponsored, multimillion dollar Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Projects

currently underway on the refuge's Calhoun and Batchtown Divisions, a willow removal project Gillespie's group recently completed on the Gilbert Lake Division, and several other refuge management issues of interest to area sportsmen. 4/30/99

300 Assist In Spring Clean-up At Sherburne NWR

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

Over 300 people took part in the annual Spring Clean-up at Sherburne NWR, April 17 and throughout the following week, providing valuable help in sprucing up Refuge public use areas. The event was co-sponsored by the Refuge and the Friends of Sherburne. Projects included litter pick up from over 50 miles of county roads that border and dissect the Refuge, trail maintenance and sign posting on two hiking trails, brush clean-up at a timber sale site, 8X8 post straightening in 4 parking areas, gate repair, leaf raking and window washing. The big project of the day was the construction of a new observation deck on the Wildlife Drive by 28 members of the Telephone Pioneers. The event was supported by 7 local non-profit agencies which included the Friends of Sherburne, Pheasants Forever, University of Minnesota Extension for Sherburne County (4-H), Boy Scouts of America, Elk River School District, Lakeview Care Center and the Telephone Pioneers. Following the completion of the projects, a free hot dog lunch and optional birding tour on the Wildlife Drive was offered to

all volunteers. 4/30/99

**National Wildlife Week
School Assemblies Focus on
Endangered Species**

*Minnesota Valley National
Wildlife Refuge*

Nature's Web: Keep the Wild Alive was the theme of this year's National Wildlife Week school assemblies. The focus was endangered species. Paul Burke and Nick Rowse of the Twin Cities Field Office (TCFO) each volunteered two half-days adding talent, expertise, and credibility to the programs. Kathryn Cassem worked with K-2 students while Ed Moyer and one of the TCFO biologists generally concentrated on grades 3-5. Sixteen separate presentations in ten schools reached approximately 2,660 students and 130 teachers. 4/30/99

**Operation Roadside Clean-up
Litchfield Wetland**

Management District

Eight employees (and one child of an employee) of the Litchfield Wetland Acquisition and Management Office did roadside cleanup on two miles of U. S. Highway 12. 4/30/99

**Service Instructs Litchfield
Gun Safety Students**

Litchfield Wetland

Management District

District and acquisition staff members guest lectured 92 area kids and several adults enrolled in a Litchfield gun safety certification course. Students were instructed on Federal laws and regulations, the Waterfowl Production Area System, and the Duck Stamp Story. Instruction was also provided on black powder

hunting, rifle use, care, and safety. 4/30/99

**Park Service Aids District's
Prescribed Fire Program**

*Litchfield Wetland Manage-
ment District*

In the spirit of interagency cooperation, National Park Service's Buffalo Module blackened 258 acres on 2 WPAs in Kandiyohi and Wright Counties. Predominately tall native grass stands were burned in an effort to increase their vigor, maintain plant diversity, reduce weed growth, and set back prairie encroaching woody vegetation. The module is a professional prescribed burning team who required a minimal amount of preparation and supervision and greatly enhanced the District's fire management goals. 4/30/99

**Prescribed Fire Nourishes
Litchfield Grasslands**

*Litchfield Wetland Manage-
ment District*

The District took advantage of a dry stretch of April weather and burned 2,352 acres on 13 Waterfowl Production Areas. National Park Service's Buffalo Module rendered burning assistance on two of the units. Predominately cool season native grass stands have been targeted so far, however, at least 1,000 acres of warm season grasses are scheduled the remainder of the season. Fire is extremely effective in discouraging competing exotic plant growth while favoring native grasses and forbs. The denser, more diverse native vegetation provides ideal cover for nesting wildlife. 4/30/99

**Whooping Crane Sighted in
NW Kandiyohi County**

Litchfield Wetland

Management District

At 10 a.m. April 28, 1999, an immature whooping crane (*Grus americana*) was sighted during waterfowl counts on a 15-acre restored, private, pastured wetland next to the Freese WPA. It was first thought to be a white pelican, but the fact that it leaped into the air from a mudflat, only its primary wing feathers were black and flew with its rusty head/neck and black legs extended, removed that possibility. The bird was not seen on subsequent visits. 4/30/99

**Minnesota Junior Duck Pro-
gram Gains Exposure**

*Minnesota Valley National
Wildlife Refuge*

Judie Miller, Minnesota Valley NWR, participated in the Minnesota Academic Excellence Foundation (MAEF) ceremonies at the State Capitol. MAEF encouraged the state legislature to promote academic excellence in the schools. Last year the Minnesota Junior Duck Stamp Program was nominated by MAEF to the "Reach for the Stars" Program due to its academic excellence. The Minnesota Junior Duck Stamp Program was invited to showcase its excellence by hanging this year's award winning art just outside the governor's office. 4/30/99

Minnesota Junior Duck Stamp Ceremony Draws a Crowd

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Minnesota Valley NWR hosted the annual ceremony at the Minnesota School of Environmental Studies in Apple Valley on April 17. More than 450 guests were on hand to celebrate the successes of Minnesota youngsters who placed in this year's competition. Motivational speakers and a "song strumming" story teller saluted the talents of these children. A U.S. Postal Service Station was set up to commemorate the day. Stamps were marked with a cancel designed by Joseph Hautman, Federal Duck Stamp Artist. Philatelic products such as special cachets designed by student artists and Junior Duck Stamps were available. Each student received his or her ribbon and award while proud teachers, parents, and other family members viewed the individual's art on a large screen. Special honors went to Rebecca Latham, the first Minnesota student to place in the national competition and to this year's current Best-of-Show winner, Sara Stack. Sara's painting titled, "Lesser Scaup at Rest," will be forwarded to Washington, D.C. for this year's National Competition. 4/30/99

Minnesota Student Captures Second Place in National Contest

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Sara Stack, Maplewood, Minnesota took second place in the national competition for the

Junior Duck Stamp Program, in Washington D.C. April 30.

Sara is a 18-year old student at North Highschool in North St. Paul. Sara won second place with her acrylic rendition of a pair of lesser scaup. This was the first time that Sara had entered the contest. Sara, her art teacher, and one of her parents will be invited to Washington D.C. in November for an award ceremony. They will tour Washington and also attend the adult Federal Duck Stamp Competition. 4/30/99

WPA Serves as Outdoor Classroom

Windom Wetland Management District

Windom Wetland Management District, helped train instructors and assisted in teaching environmental education classes held on the Worthington WPA, April 28. A total of 240 area fifth grade students participated in this outdoor education experience. 4/30/99

Otter Tail County Conservation Days

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Chuck Vukonich from the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District was part of the 1999 Otter Tail County Conservation Day. He gave 12, talks about wetland Ecosystem's and the invertebrates associated with them. He spoke to approximately 250 students and 15 parents. He also set up a fish aquarium with live samples of invertebrates, and microscopes for the students to use. 4/30/99

Regional Envirothon Held at Agassiz NWR

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Twenty three teams from 9 schools in northwest Minnesota participated in the Envirothon held at Agassiz NWR on April 28. Two teams from Thief River Falls took 1st and 2nd place and a team from Roseau took third place. The Thief River Falls team went on to State and took 5th place out of 30 competing teams. This was the 6th year the northwest regional Envirothon was held at Agassiz NWR. Gary Tischer is the refuge coordinator. Partner include: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service, County Agricultural Extension Service and Thief River Falls Fire Department. 4/30/99

Rod Sando Visits, Discusses Economic Impact of Waterfowl Production Areas

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Former Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Service consultant Rod Sando visited with the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District staff to discuss the economic implication of Waterfowl Production Areas on local communities as well as taxes. Several issues were discussed including the net gain of Duck Stamp dollars flowing into the state of Minnesota, overall flows of Federal and State dollars versus lost taxes in SWAP counties, the decreasing economic role of agriculture and increasing role of outdoor recreation. 4/30/99

Princeton Middle School Logs 1,440 Volunteer Hours to Start Water Quality Testing Program on Refuge

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

Students of Princeton Middle School logged 1,440 volunteer hours to start a water quality testing program on the Refuge. One hundred twenty students visited the Refuge in the spring and fall taking water samples from five sites across the Refuge and analyzing them. The students also received instruction in math, social studies and English as part of an integrated curriculum using the Refuge as an outdoor classroom. Data gathered by the students will be used by Refuge staff to monitor water quality across the Refuge. 5/5/99

Prairie Wetlands Learning Center Celebrates Diversity of Migratory Birds

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC

Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (PWLC) in Fergus Falls, Minn., held a special event focusing on the diversity of migratory birds in celebration of International Migratory Bird Day May 8, 1999. Thirty adults and 25 students attended, participating in various activities and gathering information from booths and displays. Featured works of local watercolor painter/naturalist, Marion Otnes, were displayed in the Visitor Center. Lake Country Gardens donated plants for booths and displays. Wild Bird Unlimited sold various items in the Great Hall. Information was available on birdscaping your yard and garden, setting up a bird feeding station, squirrel proofing your feeders, and making your water garden bird friendly.

Ongoing activities included bird walks around the Center behavior bingo, and preparing gourds for bird houses. The gourds were donated by Jim Palmer, a learning center volunteer. Families were encouraged to take their birdhouses home. Bird pinatas were broken by enthusiastic children at scheduled times throughout the day. Young and old said they enjoyed our Bird Day Celebration. The filming of our monthly Earth Stewards cable TV show captured the event and will be broadcast to an average of 4,200 viewers this month. 5/8/99

First Intern Arrives For Duty at Prairie Wetlands Learning Center

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC

Heather Rickerl, the first of five interns scheduled to work at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center this summer, arrived at PWLC May 10, 1999. Rickerl will be a Senior at North Dakota State University this fall majoring in zoology. Heather will be dividing her week between the PWLC and Glendalough State Park near Battle Lake, Minn. Among her duties will be to help with visitors, while improving their knowledge on Prairie and Wetlands. The Intern Program is a joint venture between the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, State Parks and the Service's PWLC. Partners include: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, state parks. 5/10/99

Students, Adults Participate in Environmental Education Programs at PWLC

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC

Three hundred thirty-four students and 97 adults from Adams Elementary, Eisenhower Elementary, Trinity Lutheran School, Fergus Falls Middle School, Early Childhood Family Education, and Frazee Elementary School participated in environmental education programs and activities at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center the week of May 15, 1999. Among the week's activities were: Ecosystem projects, aquatic life, seeds, bird's flight, gourd birdhouses, bison bones, frogs, rocks, insects, bird behavior bingo, and bird walks. Twenty-two students and four adults stayed in the dormitory rooms on Thursday night. They were treated to an activity that has students searching for old buffalo bones along the trail. These fourth graders agreed that staying overnight at the PWLC was Great. 5/15/99

Detroit Lakes WMD Staff Mentors Water Festival Students

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

Throughout March, April, and May, Wildlife Biologist Les Peterson mentored two local fourth grade students during their development of a project about wetlands and the benefits that wetlands provide for society such as wildlife habitat, flood control, groundwater recharge, recreation, and pollution filtering. The stu-

dents produced a display and gave six presentations about wetlands and their values during the first annual Detroit Lakes Water Festival held on May 15 and 17, 1999. 5/17/99

LaCrosse FRO Assists With Regional Fishing Day Activities

LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office

LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office (FRO) co-sponsored the Tomah (Wis.) Veterans Administration Hospital's Fishing Day May 19, 1999. Approximately 100 patients participated, trying their luck at catching a rainbow trout or largemouth bass as stocked by Genoa National Fish Hatchery. LaCrosse FRO also assisted with Fishing Day events at the Upper Mississippi, Minnesota Valley and Necedah NWRefuges. Hundreds of kids and adults participated; improving both their fishing skills and their knowledge the aquatic world. Partners include: Upper Mississippi Refuge-Winona District; Genoa National Fish Hatchery; Tomah Veterans Administration Hospital; American Legion of Wisconsin; Tomah, Wis., Middle School and volunteers. 5/19/99

25 Acres of Oak/Savannah Habitat Restored by Minnesota Conservation Corps

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Twenty-five acres of oak savannah habitat were restored on Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge after three members of a local Minnesota Conservation Corp crew spent four days girdling aspen on the Refuge May 17-20, 1999.

Partners include: Minnesota Conservation Corps. 5/20/99

School Groups Visit Prairie Wetlands Learning Center

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC

Breckenridge Elementary School, Fergus Falls Middle School, Perham, Dent, Heart of the Lakes Elementary School, Rothsay Elementary School, Morning Son Christian School, West Central Area North Elementary in Elbow Lake, and Battle Lake Elementary School were visitors at the PWLC. Sixty-two adults and 298 students participated in the following environmental education programs and activities: Prairie, Wetlands, Bird Walk, Aquatics, Bugs, Bird Behavior Bingo, Observation Skills, Food Web, and Habitat. 5/22/99

Earth Stewards Projects on Display at PWLC

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC

Staff from the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center hosted an "Evening with Earth Stewards" May 24, 1999. Two hundred parents and 150 students from the Fergus Falls Middle School gathered to see the display of finished projects throughout the Learning Center. 5/24/99

Restoration of Rare Tamarack Swamp Initiated on Sherburne NWR

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

In the spring of 1999, about 8,000 tamarack seedlings were planted on 12 acres as an initial effort to restore a historic 133-acre tamarack swamp on

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. Tamarack swamps have become increasingly fragmented and absent from the Refuge since European settlement. This habitat type is the rarest on the Refuge and has emerged as a priority for ecosystem restoration efforts. To continue this effort, an additional 10,000 seedlings are scheduled for planting in the spring of 2000. Monitoring of the site for the efficacy of several site preparation techniques and survivorship of the trees will continue into the future. Partners include: Elk River High School, Volunteers of Sherburne NWR, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. 5/26/99

Nearly 3,000 Native Sugar Maple Trees Planted at Rydell NWR

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

On May 27 and 28, nearly 3,000 sugar maple and basswood tree seedlings were planted on the Rydell National Wildlife Refuge. The plantings are part of the woodland restoration program outlined in the Refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan to restore the west half of the Refuge to a climax maple/basswood ecotype. Thanks to Refuge volunteers and assistance from Detroit Lakes Wetlands Office staff, the trees were planted in two days. 5/28/99

5,685 Grassland Acres Burned by Detroit Lakes WMD

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

The Detroit Lakes WMD burning crew prescribe burned

5,685 acres of prairie grasslands during the spring of 1999. Most of the burns were on District WPAs but four burns were conducted on 354 acres of privately owned native prairie and one 560 acre burn was conducted jointly with the Minnesota Department Of Natural Resources on a Wildlife Management Area. Burning stimulates prairie grass and forb growth, enhances prairie plant seed production, reduces wildfire potential by reducing the vegetation litter fuel load, recycles nutrients that are tied up in dead vegetation, and sets back encroaching woody vegetation. The result of prescribe burning prairie grasslands is better habitat for waterfowl, other migratory birds and numerous resident wildlife species. Partners include: Four Private Landowners, Minnesota DNR and volunteers. 5/31/99

District Staff Helps County Rear Leaf Eating Beetles

Litchfield Wetland Management District
Litchfield Wetland Management District office is assisting Meeker county by providing our maintenance shop as a secure site for the county agricultural inspector to raise purple loosestrife leaf-eating beetles (*Galerucella* sp.); a cooperative, proactive effort that will benefit both agencies. There are only a few loosestrife problem areas in the county, to date, and they are on private lands. If the county can reduce the spread of this species onto WPA lands, the District's cost of control will be significantly reduced. 5/30/99

Refuge Helps Celebrate Migratory Bird Day at Como Zoo

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Despite a light morning drizzle and cool, overcast conditions, 17 volunteers and staff contacted more than 3,000 inner-city and diverse ethnic families who visited Como Zoo on International Migratory Bird Day, May 8. For the first time, the event included exhibitors and live music. About 750 children became "Winning Warblers" by gathering colored habitat dots from adults to complete a certificate of survival and claim a poster award. 5/30/99

Youth Learn Firearms Safety Windom Wetland Management District

The Simulated Action Firearm Education Training for Youth System (SAFETY) was used by District staff to provide firearms safety training at the Martin County Ducks Unlimited Greenwing event on May 22, 1999, and to the Cottonwood County 4-H Shooting Sports club on May 26, 1999. A total of 176 young hunters received this valuable training. 5/30/99.

Migratory Bird Day Celebrated at Sherburne NWR *Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge*

Migratory Bird Day was celebrated at Sherburne NWR, May 15, with two guided bird tours attended by 30 visitors. Bob Janssen, author of *Birds In Minnesota*, and Jay Hammernick, retired refuge manager, led intermediate and

experienced birders on a "Songbird Search" on the Blue Hill Trail. while Refuge volunteer wildlife interpreters led beginning birders and families to the Wildlife Drive for a look at "Birds In The Wetlands". A total of 86 species were tallied. This event was co-sponsored by the Friends of Sherburne. Outreach efforts for Migratory Bird Day included the distribution of 200 posters to 27 schools in 5 school districts located within a 25-mile radius of the Refuge. 5/30/99

Search for Indiana bat at Crab Orchard NWR

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge

A highly skilled bat netting biologist from the Illinois Natural History Survey conducted a training exercise on Crab Orchard NWR May 5 and 6. Four other biologists and five individuals from Southern Illinois University participated in setting nets, conducting surveys, and sharing information during these two nights. The training exercise was in preparation for surveying efforts that will be conducted this summer to determine the presence/absence of endangered Indiana bats on the refuge. Although refuge lands are within the species' range, and provide suitable summer habitat, it is unknown at this time whether the bats are present. Their presence will impact future forest management activities on the refuge. 5/30/99

Successful Burning Season for the Windom Wetland Management District

Windom Wetland Management District

Windom Wetland Management District completed its most successful prescribed burning season to date despite reduced burning opportunities due to prolonged wet weather. Burns were completed on 23 WPAs for a total of 3,280 acres. Two volunteers contributed 160 hours of assistance which enabled the staff to assemble a burn crew whenever favorable burn conditions existed. Prescribed burning assistance was also received from the U.S. Park Service's Buffalo Fire Use Module from the Buffalo National River at Harrison, Arkansas. This self-contained crew of prescribed burning specialists were able to independently complete four of the above burns for a total of 310 acres. 5/30/99

District Biologist Assists Boy Scouts With Merit Badges

Windom Wetland Management District

On May 1, 1999, Windom Wetland Management District Biologist Braastad served as an instructor for the Twin Valley Boy Scout Spring Conclave. He provided hands-on activities which enabled 155 Scouts to obtain Surveying and Conservation Merit Badges. 5/30/99

First Recorded Turkey Harvest on a WPA

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

The Fergus Falls Wetland Management District had its first recorded turkey harvest on Baumann Waterfowl Production Area., Otter Tail County. The turkey was harvested during a special season, it weighed 21 lbs. The bird was banded and records showed it was released in January 1998. It had been released 20 miles from where it was harvested. A Minnesota DNR employee said it was the farthest recorded migration for a banded bird. 5/30/99

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Twin Cities Audubon Group Bird in NW Minnesota

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Twenty-five members of a Twin Cities Audubon group spent two days birding in northwest Minnesota May 22-23, 2000. On May 22 they spent the entire day at Agassiz Refuge. A slide presentation on refuge research projects was given in the evening in Holt, Minn.. The local Agassiz Audubon Chapter helped arrange the tour and an effort

was made to encourage the group to arrange lunches and meeting room rental in the rural communities surrounding the refuge, demonstrating that Birds Mean Business. 5/30/99

35th North American Moose Conference

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

The following were presented by Agassiz staff: A Land Managers Perspective on Research, Refuge Manager Anderson; Decline of Moose Population in northwest Minnesota, Refuge Biologist Huschle; and Moose Population Dynamics in northwest Minnesota: An Interim Report. The 35th North American Moose Conference was held at Grand Portage, Minnesota, May 15-20. This was the first time a conference was held on a Reservation and was hosted by the Grand Portage Chippewa. Anderson served on the organizing committee over the past year. 5/30/99

Agassiz Observation Deck Repaired

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Refuge Maintenance Staff Myhrer, Wockenfus, VanEps, and Forestry Technician Anderson spent 8 days repairing the observation deck along County Road 7. This was a project identified in MMS Safety Funds. 5/30/99

Refuge Hosts State Envirothon

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

This year, Minnesota Valley

National Wildlife Refuge was selected for the State Envirothon, an outdoor and hands-on science competition for high school youth. Students took a 20 question quiz at five different stations. Stations were Wildlife, Soils, Aquatics/ Water Quality, Forestry, and Prescribed Burning. After taking part in regional competitions the best 5-person teams advanced to the State event. Peterson/Rushford School students were the proud winners and will advance to the national competition. 5/30/99

Agassiz NWR - Oak /Savanna Enhancement

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Three Minnesota Conservation Corp enrollees spent four days May 10-13, girdling aspen and other non-oak species. They completed girdling trees in two 12+ acre plots designated for oak/savannah habitat restoration. One plot is located immediately south of the maintenance shop the other is located on the east boundary immediately south of ditch 194. 5/30/99

Service Staff Survey 120 Acres For CRP Wetland Restoration

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Service staff from Agassiz NWR and Minnesota Private Lands Office in St. Cloud, Minn., spent the week of May 17, 1999, surveying CRP (16th sign up) for wetland restorations. They completed surveying 45 wetlands in Marshall County. Results are as follows: 50 ditch plugs, 45 wetlands, 120 acres, 10 land

owners and 15 contracts. There are about 600 acres left to survey. 5/30/99

Moose Calf Production Improves in Northwest Minnesota

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Moose calf surveys were completed by PhD student Eric Cox May 28, 1999. After three days of flying to observe radio collared cows in the three study sites; 31 calves were spotted; with nine sets of twins. Calf production in Beltrami Island State Forest Area and Agassiz NWR was vastly improved over the previous several years. Results are as follows:

BELTRAMI: twins (3), singles (4), ST=7, 7 cows w/calves out of 14 collared.

AGASSIZ: twins (2), singles(10), ST=12, 12 cows w/calves out of 20.

VIKING AG. AREA: twins (4), singles (4), ST=12, 8 cows w/calves out of 15.

Calf checks will continue this week, but peak of calving is over. Partners in the study include: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Universities of Idaho & Mass. Wildlife Forever, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation and Rice Area Sportsmen 5/30/99

District Assists Minnesota DNR With Annual Prairie Chicken Counts

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Chuck Vukonich and Jim Piehl assisted the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources on its annual Prairie Chicken counts. Several new booming grounds have been located next

to Waterfowl Production Areas and it appears the prairie chicken is increasing its numbers in the southern portion of its range in Minnesota. 5/30/99

"EARTH SMART", Juried Art Show a Success

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

"EARTH SMART" was the title of the first-ever juried art exhibit at Minnesota Valley NWR April 20 through May 31, 1999. Twenty-two environmental art works from various mediums were exhibited. The juried art show was coordinated by Kari Lennartson, a volunteer intern. Kari contributed sixty hours to this effort. Elizabeth Greenbaum, Bloomington Art Center, was the juror. More than fifty visitors attended the opening reception held April 24, 1999. 5/30/99

Presentation for the Fergus Falls Fish & Game Club

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Chad Raitz from the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District gave a presentation at the Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club meeting. Discussed were projects that are currently being worked on and future projects that the Club may be able to help fund. There were 25 club members in attendance, the meeting was held at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center. 5/30/99

Civil Service Job Seeker Seminar

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Chad Raitz from the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District gave a presentation on career opportunities with the Service to 100 people, most of whom were veterans. The presentation included a short history of hiring; the types of positions open within the agency; some of the qualifications, education and experience for different positions; how the openings are advertised; the application process; the selection process; and what summer jobs may exist. The seminar was presented by the Minnesota Workforce Center as a service to the veterans in our area. The seminar was held at the Fergus Falls VFW Club. 5/30/99

Refuge Officers Assist Minnesota Valley Refuge

Litchfield Wetland Management District

Two refuge officers and one law enforcement special agent from St. Paul, Minn., united with the lead officer from the Minnesota Valley NWR to step up visitor contacts on the refuge May 22-23, 1999. Heavy rain and cooler temperatures significantly reduced public use over the weekend. Approximately 50 compliance checks were made, resulting in the issuances of six notice of violation (NOV) for fishing without a valid license and two NOV for fishing multiple lines. 5/30/99

Litchfield Burn Season Ends Abruptly

Litchfield Wetland Management District

Advantageous April sunshine transitioned into too many unfortuitous May showers and an abrupt end to a promising beginning of another prescribed burn season. In just a little over one week, however, the Litchfield fire crew still managed to blacken 2,363 acres of native grassland on 13 Waterfowl Production Areas and a city park. A valuable Partnership was also established with the National Park Service's Buffalo Fire Use Module. 5/30/99

Migratory Bird Day Celebrated at Sherburne NWR

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

Migratory Bird Day was celebrated at Sherburne NWR, May 15, 1999, with two guided bird tours attended by 30 visitors. Bob Janssen, author of *Birds In Minnesota*, and Jay Hammernick, retired refuge manager, led intermediate and experienced birders on a "Songbird Search" on the Blue Hill Trail. While Refuge volunteer wildlife interpreters led beginning birders and families to the Wildlife Drive for a look at "Birds In The Wetlands". A total of 86 species were tallied. This event was co-sponsored by the Friends of Sherburne. Outreach efforts for Migratory Bird Day included the distribution of 200 posters to 27 schools in 5 school districts located within a 25-mile radius of the Refuge. 5/30/99

Record Year for Prescribed Burning at Fergus Falls

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

The Fergus Falls Wetland Management District burned a record 4,074 acres on 25 different burns. This record was achieved despite a two-week period when rain stopped us from doing any burning. Most of the acres burned were on the Waterfowl Production Area's but there were 3 areas where landowners allowed us to burn, 1 area that the state helped burn and a 10-acre wildfire. 5/30/99

American Wetlands Month Celebrated at Mark Twain NWR

Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge- Annada District

The Shaw Arboretum located near St. Louis, celebrated American Wetlands Month throughout May with numerous tours, workshops, and speakers. The centerpiece of this celebration was a 21-acre wetland complex completed in 1995 under a Partners for Wildlife agreement. An estimated 5,300 people participated in guided day and night tours, workshops, lectures, and presentations. Annada District staff also provided a variety of interpretive and educational materials. Service funding for the original project was provided by the Annada District and the Columbia Field Office. The Regional Sign Shop recently developed an interpretive sign that identifies and describes the project and Partnerships involved. 5/30/99

300 Assist In Spring Clean-up At Sherburne NWR

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

More than 300 people took part in the annual spring clean-up at Sherburne NWR, April 17 and throughout the following week, providing valuable help in sprucing up Refuge public use areas. The event was co-sponsored by the Refuge and the Friends of Sherburne. Projects included litter pick up from over 50 miles of county roads that border and dissect the Refuge, trail maintenance and sign posting on two hiking trails, brush clean-up at a timber sale site, post straightening in four parking areas, gate repair, leaf raking and window washing. The big project of the day was the construction of a new observation deck on the Wildlife Drive by 28 members of the Telephone Pioneers. The event was supported by 7 local non-profit agencies which included the Friends of Sherburne, Pheasants Forever, University of Minnesota Extension for Sherburne County (4-H), Boy Scouts of America, Elk River School District, Lakeview Care Center and the Telephone Pioneers. Following the completion of the projects, a free hot dog lunch and optional birding tour on the Wildlife Drive was offered to all volunteers. 4/30/99

Prescribed Burn Results For Mark Twain NWR-Annada District

Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge- Annada District

The Mark Twain NWR, Annada District completed the 1999 prescribed burning season by

conducting six burns which totaled 772 acres. Three of the burns, totaling 127 acres, were conducted on the Delair Division. Three burns were also conducted on the Clarence Cannon NWR totaling 645 acres. This includes a 430 acre wet prairie unit which was burned to reduce undesirable vegetation and help maintain grassland. 4/30/99

All Aboard the Floating Classroom!

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

More than ,700 students from 21 elementary schools studied the Mississippi River and its watershed while aboard a river paddle boat. Prior to the 16 paddle boat field trips, four teacher workshops were conducted in February to prepare teachers. Over 1,700 students connected with the Mississippi River from a floating classroom on the river. During the two-hour paddle boat trips, called the "Big River Journey", students learn about the Mississippi River and it's watershed through six learning stations. "Big River Journey" is coordinated by the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (National Park Service) and the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge's environmental education staff and volunteers partner in this unique learning experience. Four other public and private organizations partner with the "Big River Journey",

which includes 16 river field trips in May and 4 teacher workshops in February. Partners include: Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (National Park Service), Padelford Packet Boat Company, Science Museum of Minnesota, and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. 5/30/99

Detroit Lakes Festival of Birds a Success

Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge

The 3rd Annual Detroit Lakes Festival of Birds brought together approximately 700 people. Events included horse-drawn wagon rides, picnic supper, six field trips to area birding hotspots, workshops on landscaping for attracting birds and other wildlife, and bird identification, as well as a wildlife craft and trade show, a banquet with well-known Minnesota naturalist, Stan Tekiela giving the key-note address and Programs for children and families at the Washington Square Mall in downtown Detroit Lakes. Partners include: Detroit Lakes Tribune, Detroit Lakes Regional Chamber of Commerce, Detroit Lakes Tourism Bureau, Becker Pet & Garden, Bremer Bank, Washington Square Mall (Detroit Lakes), and Best Western Holland House & Suites (Detroit Lakes). 5/30/99

PWLC Welcomes Additional Interns

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC

Interns Angela Kopp, Kara Clancy, and Kevina Nakiwala

joined Service staff at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center during the summer of 1999. They will be spending their first week attending training sessions and various projects will be assigned for completion within the next two and one half months. The interns will also assist with environmental education programs and activities throughout the summer. 6/1/99

PWLC Hosts 'Good Morning Fergus Falls'

Fergus Falls Wetland

Management District/PWLC
Twenty six adults and 118 students from Milona Elementary, Fergus Falls Middle School, and Eisenhower Preschool visited the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (PWLC) during their last week of school in early June 1999. Environmental education programs and activities included: a Scavenger Hunt, Prairie, Wetland, and Observation Skills. The Scavenger Hunt was filmed as part of the June Earth Stewards TV program. The audience was also introduced to the PWLC interns. On June 3, the PWLC hosted "Good Morning Fergus Falls". This is a monthly radio show designed to advertise upcoming local happenings. The Visitor Center was open on the first Saturday of June. Having the Visitor Center open on Saturdays will continue throughout Labor Day weekend. 6/4/99

Detroit Lakes WMD Staff Honors Volunteers for 3,381 Hours of Resource Work

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

Seventy-Seven Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District volunteers were honored by District staff a Volunteer Appreciation dinner June 4, 1999. The volunteers contributed a total of 3,381 hours to District programs during Fiscal Year 1998. Volunteers worked on waterfowl surveys, wetland and upland restorations, prescribed burning preparation, WPA boundary posting, outreach, construction of public use facilities, and the Waterfowl Expo. Several of these projects would not have been possible without the assistance of volunteers. Volunteers contributed an estimated \$33,800 worth of labor to the Detroit Lakes WMD during the year. Volunteer John McGovern was honored as Volunteer of the Year for the Wetland District. 6/4/99

New Fishery Biologists Increase Reach of Carterville FRO

Carterville Fishery Resources Office

The Carterville Fishery Resources Office (FRO) added two new fishery biologists in Fiscal year 1999 to strengthen its biological staff. Chad Stinson joined the staff March 21, 1999, for a one year term. Greg Conover joined the FRO staff June 6, as a permanent employee. The addition of two fishery biologists to the Carterville FRO staff improves the staff's capability to be actively involved in the

management of the regions aquatic resources. Chad Stinson is working on a biological assessment of the Kankakee River drainage, a pallid sturgeon survey on the lower Ohio River, and SIKES Act fishery management activities. Greg Conover manages the MICRA National Paddlefish Database and Coded-Wire Tag Processing Center, conducts inspections for the Service's Triploid Grasscarp Inspection/Certification Program, and conducts fishery management activities on waters owned by the Department of Defense. 6/6/99

PWLC Hosts NCTC Training

Fergus Falls Wetland

Management District/PWLC

A two-day training session conducted through the National Conservation Training Center was conducted June 8-10, 1999, at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (PWLC). Twenty adults attended the informative classes on Nature Quest, College for Kids, Alaska Environmental Camp, 4-H Camp, Youth Programs, and YWCA. PWLC Environmental Educator, Teresa Jaskiewicz, and Gary Stolz were course leaders. 6/10/99

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District is First to be Featured on Volunteer Web Site

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District
The Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District became the first Service station in the country to be featured in the VolunteerAmerica.Com web

site. VolunteerAmerica.com operates the to connect individuals, families, and groups with volunteer opportunities on public lands across the United States. Since Detroit Lakes WMD was the first station in the Service to contact VolunteerAmerica.Com about running a volunteer opportunities ad on their Web site, they agreed to post the Detroit Lakes WMD volunteer opportunities for free as a public service for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The site can be found on the Web at: www.volunteeramerica.com. 6/15/99

Upper Mississippi Refuge Biologists Band White Pelicans

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge

Biologists from Upper Mississippi River NW&FR have teamed up with Dr. Al Grewe, St. Cloud State University, in the capture, banding, and color-marking of American white pelicans in western Minn. Dr. Grewe has banded nearly 40,000 young pelicans over a 20+ year period. Eric Nelson, Refuge Biologist and his wife, accompanied Dr. Grewe's crew to Marsh Lake, Lac Qui Parle County, on June 19, 1999 and attached patagial wing tags on 198 of 2,000 young pelicans banded. The flightless young are hatched and raised on an isolated island in Marsh Lake. Adult pelicans are using the Refuge in increasing numbers. The summer occurrence of non-breeding American white pelicans on the Refuge is a rather recent phenomenon, since the 1980's the "summer"

population on the River has reached nearly 1,500 birds. The natal origin of these birds is not known, but some of these birds probably were raised in western Minnesota at Marsh Lake. The Refuge is conducting a three-year project studying the number and distribution of white pelicans using the Refuge. This study will be greatly enhanced with the ability to identify individual birds. It is quite likely that white pelicans could begin nesting on Refuge islands during the next few years. Pelicans could soon receive public scrutiny as fish eaters similar to that of the double-crest cormorant here in the Great Lakes Region. Also, documentation of white pelican use of the river will enhance our ability to address pelican issues as they develop. Partners include: St. Cloud State University Minnesota Department of Natural Resources-Area Wildlife Office. 6/19/99

260,000 Flea Beetles Collected to Control Leafy Spurge

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

For the second year staff members at the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District (WMD) traveled to North Dakota to collect Leafy Spurge Flea Beetles. The successful collection netted 260,000 flea beetles which were later released on 11 Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) across the five county district. This is the second year of releases on the WMD, with last years releases showing very good response at their

sites. With luck there will be harvestable populations of beetles to locate to other areas infested with leafy spurge. Partners include Ward County North Dakota Weed Control Office. 6/24/99

LaCrosse FRO, Park Service Monitor Zebra Mussels in St. Croix River

LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office

A week-long zebra mussel monitoring effort coordinated by the LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office (FRO) and the National Park Service was completed on the St. Croix River June 25, 1999. More than 700 boats were inspected by divers with evidence of the mussels found on only two boats. These boats were lifted and cleaned. Zebra mussels were also found in the lower river on native mussels. This is significant, due to the importance of this river's native mussel populations. The St. Croix river borders Minnesota and Wisconsin. Other partners include: National Park Service-St.Croix Scenic Riverway, Minnesota/Wisconsin Boundry Area Commission, Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, U.S. Coast Guard, Northern States Power and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. 6/25/99

Agassiz NWR June Open House and Plant Information Program

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge hosted an open house June 27, 1999 featuring Janet

Boe, plant ecologist from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Office in Bemidji, Minn. Boe presented a plant identification and information program from 2-4 p.m. A slide show on plants was shown in the office; followed by a field trip to several areas of the refuge to locate plants and discuss them. The program was one of Agassiz's summer open houses to provide information about natural resources to the public. Opening the office to the public allows people to view mounts of wildlife and displays, to discuss natural resources with refuge personnel and to purchase items offered for sale in the bookshop. Partners include: Agassiz Audubon Society, Warren, Minn.. 6/27/99

Agassiz Breeding Bird Point Counts Hampered by Weather

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

This was the Seventh year that Breeding Bird Point Counts were conducted; habitat targeted shrub/scrub and cattail. Forty-five of 85 points planned were completed in Shrub/scrub; none of the 50 scheduled in cattail habitat were completed. Poor weather conditions prevented points from being completed. Most points were GPS located for future reference. All 1998 and 1999 data were entered in the new CENSUS program for analysis. Counts are accomplished under contract. 6/30/99

Area Envirothon at Chippewa Co. Park near Brandon

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

The Service had presenters at two stations at the Area II Envirothon at Chippewa County Park in Grant county. The envirothon consists of six stations where the students are tested at wildlife, a current topic (which was wildfire management), soils, forestry, wetlands and aquatics and oral presentations. Each school ends up with a final score and the top 3 scores go to the state envirothon to compete. There were approximately 108 students who participated. It is a great opportunity for environmental education. This was the fifth year for the Area II Envirothon.

Partners include: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Soil and Water Conservation Districts from Stevens, Pope, Grant, and Douglas Counties, Natural Resource Conservation Service from Stevens, Grant and Traverse Counties and several other individuals and agencies. 6/30/99

Ashland Surveys Fish Species at f Red Lake River

Ashland Fishery Resources Office

The US Army Corps of Engineers asked the Ashland Fishery Resources Office to survey the diversity of fish species in the Red Lake River on the Red Lake Indian Reservation, Red Lake Minn. The Red Lake Tribal Council is concerned about the possible presence of carp in the Red Lake River, and the potential

for introduction of this Exotic into the Red Lakes via up-stream passage through the Red Lake water control structure. No recent fishery's surveys have been conducted within this 13-mile river system (within the Reservation) to determine the presence of carp. This survey will serve as a baseline regarding this issue so future management decisions can be made. Another survey of this study area will be scheduled in October.

6/30/99

Surveys of Red Lake Reservation Help Tribes Manage Lakes

Ashland Fishery Resources Office

Frank Stone traveled to the Red Lake Indian Reservation (Red Lake, Minnesota) to conduct fishery assessments on three inland lakes (Shemahgun, Bass and Island Lakes). As part of a reimbursable agreement with the Red Lake Band, the Ashland Fishery Resources Office provides fishery technical assistance that also includes bottom trawling for walleye fingerlings in Red Lake. The data generated from these inland lake surveys were gathered using a DC electrofishing boat. The surveys are conducted during the evening hours while fish are the most active. Once the necessary information has been gathered, the fish are safely returned to the lake. The data will be summarized and a final report prepared for Tribal resource managers. This information is used by the Tribe to determine future

fishery management options for each lake. 6/30/99

Inner City Youths Participate in Fishing Day

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Youth Fishing Day reached over 300 people, 130 inner city youth attended the event in the morning. Each youth was furnished with a new rod and reel. A complete walleye was served to more than 150 people. More than 160 people attended the afternoon session. Over 50 volunteers from the refuge helped out with the event. Twelve regional office employees and eighteen refuge employees staffed the event. Youth Fishing Day at Minnesota Valley celebrates National Fishing Week. This is an all-day event at the Bass Ponds that focuses on fishing education, ethics and safety. The morning session is targeted to 100 disadvantaged inner-city youth and the afternoon is open to the public. A walleye lunch is provided for the morning group and all the staff and volunteers. The fishing was good! Partners include: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Red Lake Department of Natural Resources, 1854 Authority, Holiday Inn, Burger Brothers, Outdoor Outfitters, and Cypress Semi Conductor Corporation. 6/30/99

District Develops Agreements With Rural Fire Departments

Litchfield Wetland Management District

Cooperative fire protection agreements were ratified with the Freeport and Green Lake fire departments for wildfire

suppression on Waterfowl Production Areas (Waterfowl Production Area) in Stearns and Kandiyohi counties, respectively. Due to the beneficial fire effects on grassland habitats, suppression assistance is rendered only under threat to adjacent private property. Thus far, a total of 5 wildfires encompassing 245 acres were suppressed on District Waterfowl Production Areas by local fire departments, all in the month of April. Arson has been identified as the cause of ignition in each case. 6/30/99

Big Stone NWR Hosts Youth Fishing Day

Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge

Eighty-five youths and about 50 adults participated in "Youth Fishing Day" at Big Stone NWR hosted by Refuge staff and members of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in celebration of National Fishing Week. The youths rotated through several organized stations on various fish associated activities such as fish identification, casting, knot tying and fish printing. Though few fish were caught no one went home empty handed as each participant received a grab bag full of fishing paraphernalia and activity booklets, and a T-shirt donated by a local business. Lunch was also provided compliments of the Jaycees. Partners include: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources-Fisheries, Ortonville JCs, Bud's Bait, Pepsi of Ortonville, Schmidt's Landing/Pro's Choice Tackle, Big Stone Lake Area Chamber,

Chamberlain's Sporting Good's & Men's Wear, Sonny's Color Printing, and Odessa Rod and Gun Club. 6/30/99

Breeding Bird Survey Completed in Refuge Prairie.

Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge

Forty-eight point counts were completed to survey breeding birds on Big Stone NWR's remnant prairie tracts. Bob Janssen of the Minnesota Ornithologists Union and staff Biologist, Olson completed forty-eight point counts in Big Stone NWR's remnant prairie tracts to survey breeding birds. Sixteen points per day were completed, June 8-10. Sixty-four species were detected by the point counts. Two State Listed Species of Concern were detected, the American White Pelican and the Upland Sandpiper. Though the Pelican is a non-breeder on the Refuge, an upland sandpiper nest with four eggs was found. Eight Region 3 Priority Species were detected; wood duck, mallard, blue-winged teal, American woodcock, black tern, sedge wren, grasshopper sparrow and bobolink. The point counts allow us to monitor population trends and provide evidence on effects of management actions on grassland nesting birds. 6/30/99

Refuge Staff Reaches Students During National Wildlife Week Assemblies

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Minnesota Valley Refuge staff completed sixteen National Wildlife Week presentations at 10 schools reaching approximately 2,660 students and 130

teachers. "Nature's Web: Keep the Wild Alive" was the theme of this year's National Wildlife Week school assemblies. The focus was endangered species. Paul Burke and Nick Rowse of the Twin Cities Field Office (FO) each volunteered two half-days adding talent, expertise, and credibility to the Programs. 4/30/99

Minnesota Valley Receives Grant to Restore Wetlands
Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge received a Clean Water Action Plan Funds (CWAP) grant to restore 15 wetlands for a total of 55 acres in the Minnesota River Watershed by Fiscal Year 2000. The purpose of the project is to provide habitat for wetland dependent species. This will be accomplished by stabilizing eroding streambank, thus preventing further soil loss; establishing a native vegetative corridor with woody species; restoring a diverse class of wetlands; and fostering new Partnerships with various entities. Wetland restorations will include tile breaks, earthen dams, and control structures. Streambank restoration will be accomplished via bioengineering practices and include reshaping and resloping; rootwads; tree revetments; and revegetation of native species. The aforementioned practices will provide habitat for waterfowl, songbirds, and fish and also improve water quality. Acres/Miles of Habitat Restoration: This initiative includes the restoration of 55 acres of a diverse class of

wetlands and 450 feet of eroded streambank. This project involves the cooperation of more than 20 individual landowners and seven different organizations. Federal Trust Species Benefitted: Restoration activities will provide habitat for migratory waterfowl, neotropical migrants, herptiles, and aquatic invertebrates. Partners include: Minnesota Waterfowl Association, Various Wildlife Clubs and Metropolitan Council. 6/30/99

Minnesota Valley NWR Completes 99-Acre Restoration

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
Minnesota Valley national Wildlife Refuge completed 99 acres of habitat restoration on Erin Prairie Waterfowl Production Area in Rice County. The restoration includes 16 acres of seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands and approximately 74 acres of native prairie. The restored tract is located next to a 250 acre WMA and will provide excellent pair, breeding, and migratory habitat for waterfowl. Restoration of this tract was made possible through Partnerships from Metropolitan Council, NAWCA Grant, and contributions from various local sportsman clubs. 6/30/99

Leafy Spurge Beetles Flourishing on WPA Windom Wetland Management District

Only two years after introducing flea beetles (*Apthona spp.*) to the Timber Lake Waterfowl Production Area for biological

control of leafy spurge, a relocation was possible. Flea beetles raised on the Waterfowl Production Area have increased to the extent that some were relocated to private land in Cottonwood County to begin combating a long-standing spurge site. Minnesota Department of Agriculture personnel assisted in this release which occurred on June 25. 6/30/99

President Clinton Announces Proposal to Delist Bald Eagle
External Affairs

In a White House ceremony July 2, 1999, President Bill Clinton announced the Service's proposal to delist the Bald Eagle in the year 2000, barring any new information that would alter the proposal. The event was held on the White House South Lawn, and attended by approximately 150 invited guests. Remarks from Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt and a young leader from the Anacostia (Va.) Conservation Corps preceded the President's speech. Bald Eagle Recovery Coordinator Jody Millar was also on stage. A live eagle from the Foundation to Protect America's Eagles and an American flag provided the backdrop. Media interviews were conducted both before and after the event, in Washington and on the South Lawn. Many key players in the bald eagle's recovery were present, including the Service's Recovery Team members from throughout the country. External Affairs staff from Region 3 and the Washington Office provided

support, media materials (video, photographs, web site information, etc) and coordinated interviews with national and White House press corps prior to and on the day of the event. 7/2/99

Ducks Unlimited, Detroit Lakes WMD Dedicate Jim Sieh WPA

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

More than 60 people attended the dedication of the 160 acre Jim Sieh Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) at Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District July 7, 1999. The WPA includes a new water control structure that restored a 14-acre drained marsh. The marsh is a complement to 13 other smaller wetlands on the WPA and will provide nesting and brood rearing habitat for several waterfowl species. Ducks Unlimited was recognized for its investment of \$25,000 to fund the restoration project. Federal Aid Team Leader Bud Fuchs provided the keynote address on Jim Sieh's 39 years of dedicated service to wetland preservation and the wildlife field. Congressman Collin Peterson's Aide Sharon Josephson and members of the Buffalo/Red River Watershed District also attended. 7/8/99

Prairie Wetlands Learning Center Hosts Inner-City Kids

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC
Communicating for Agriculture provided a group of 10 inner city kids and four adults from Minneapolis to experience rural life in Minnesota during a visit to Fergus Falls, Minn. The

group, members of the Sabathani Community Center's Horizon Youth Program, toured grain, dairy, potato, and vegetable farms and visited a bakery, cheese, potato chip, and feed processing plants. The group stayed overnight at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, where they participated in environmental education programs and explored the trail system. 7/16/99

Agassiz NWR Nesting Grebes Make the News *Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge*

Brad Dokken, a writer for the Grand Forks Herald, and Chuck Kimmerle, a photographer for the paper, spent a day in the marsh at Agassiz NWR with Dr. Bruce Eichhorst, assistant professor at the University of North Dakota. Eichhorst has been studying nesting grebes on the Refuge. The Refuge visit resulted in front page coverage in the Sunday, July 18, issue of the Grand Forks Herald and color photo layout in the paper's Outdoor Section. 7/18/99

First Endangered Piping Plover Found on Minnesota Refuge

Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge

An endangered piping plover, the first seen in Minnesota's Becker County, was observed on Hamden Slough NWR July 19, 1999. The plover was seen by a member of the Lakes Area Birding Club and was widely reported to fellow Minnesota birders. The plover was observed just east of the Refuge office, on Homstad Lake which is in drawdown. 7/19/99

Russians Visit Hamden Slough NWR

Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge

Six Russian students and their adult leader visited Hamden Slough and Tamarac NWR to view vegetative Ecosystems, the transition zones between them, and the different management styles used within each system. The students viewed the prairie ecosystem, Hamden Slough and the adjacent transition zone to broadleaf forest. At Tamarac the students viewed the transition zone from broadleaf to Great Lakes Pineland. The students were also interested in the differing management techniques between prairie wetlands and mixed forest. 7/20/99

PWLC Educator Assists Cub Scout Day Camp

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC

Environmental Educator Teresa Jaskiewicz, together with other staff from the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (PWLC) conducted environmental programs for 160 Cub Scouts and 20 adults at the West Otter Tail County Fairgrounds in Fergus Falls, Minn., in late July, 1999. Center programs consisted of Animal Behavior, Predators and Prey, Trees and Leaves, and Mystery Animal. 7/24/99

Group Tours Niemackl Watershed Project

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC

The Niemackl Technical Committee conducted a tour of the Niemackl Watershed July 27, 1999, to show watershed improvement practices imple-

mented in the watershed. Local landowners, township, county and state officials, state senator Charlie Berg and members of the public attended the tour. Jim Piehl discussed wetland and upland restoration in the watershed. Partners include: Minnesota DNR, local landowners, township county and state officials. 7/27/99

Service Assists in Repatriation of Native American Ghost Shirt

St. Paul Law Enforcement
William O'Neill of the Glasgow Museum arrived at Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport July 27, 1999 with the Glasgow Ghost Shirt, a Native American artifact that had been in the museum's collection since the 1890s. The Ghost Shirt was allegedly removed from the body of a warrior at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, and found its way to Scotland. Allen Duke, a member of the Osage Tribe, discovered the shirt in a Scottish museum in 1995. The Wounded Knee Survivors Association, South Dakota Historical Society and the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe requested the repatriation of the shirt. To facilitate entry of the Ghost Shirt under Endangered Species Act, Bald Eagle Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Service took custody of the shirt and escorted it to tribal representatives. Partners include: Glasgow Museum and Glasgow City Council Glasgow, Scotland; Wounded Knee Survivors Association and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Eagle Butte, South Dakota and South Dakota Historical Society, Pierre, South Dakota. 7/28/99

National Soil Team Checks Soil in Bisson Lake

Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge

Twenty -eight soil scientists from the United States and Canada spent three days on Hamden Slough NWR in late July 1999 to check, collect and analyze soils in Bisson Lake. The scientists reviewed soil characteristics as they changed from uplands to wetlands. The team included scientists G. Wade Hurt, Chairman, National Technical Committee for Hydric Soils, Warren Lynn, National Soil Lab, and Bob Eilers, Manitoba Land Resource Unit. The team became interested in the extensive analysis conducted in Bisson Lake by North Dakota State University. A 200-foot trench was dug 6 feet deep to check soil strata and ground water seepage. 7/29/99

Detroit Lakes WMD Restores 700 Acres to Prairie Grassland

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

700 acres of former cropland was restored to native prairie grassland on 13 Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) and the Rydell NWR by the Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District since October 1, 1998 (Fiscal Year 1999). Most of the seed was harvested from local WPAs and processed at the Detroit Lakes WMD seed processing facility. Some of the forb (wildflower) seed was purchased with funds that were donated by the Becker County (Minnesota) Sportsman's Club. Twenty-eight acres were seeded by broadcasting the seed on snow-

covered areas during the winter months. An estimated 275 ducks will be produced on these acres each year and numerous other resident and migratory wildlife species will benefit from this habitat annually. Partners include: 13 cooperative farmers and Becker County Sportsman's Club. 7/30/99

Return to the Prairie Day' Brings 1,000 to Prairie Wetlands Learning Center

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC
The Prairie Wetlands Learning Center welcomed approximately 1,000 people on July 31 for "Return to the Prairie Day." Designed to promote greater public understanding and appreciation for prairie habitat, the day included numerous activities for all ages. The fourth annual "Mosquito Run" a five and ten kilometer run/walk attracted competitive runners as well as those who just wanted to enjoy the great weather. Races were held on the PWLC trail system providing a unique cross country course and spectacular scenery. "Return to the Prairie Day" depicted life 100 years ago. The Jim Brandenburg Photography Exhibit "Minnesota: Images of Home" was a featured exhibit. Others exhibits included spinning and photography. Discovery Walks for birds and prairie restoration were conducted along with tips about butterfly gardening and sled dogs and dog care. 7/31/99

New Method Used to Complete Native Grass Seeding *Windom Wetland Management District*

Ducks Unlimited provided funding for one large project which was matched by NAWCA to provide funds for grass/forb seeds. A total of 442 acres were recently planted to native grass/forbs to complete the Windom Wetland Management District's 1999 seeding Program. A new planting method was used on 360 acres. A Vicon broadcast seeder, was mounted to the front of a tractor which also pulled a cultipacker to incorporate the seed. This system allows one-pass seeding and reduced seeding time by approximately 50 percent compared to using Truax native grass seed drills. Partners include Ducks Unlimited
7/30/99

National Soil Team Checks Soil in Bisson Lake

Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge

The topographic sequence of soil characteristics from upland to wetlands was checked, collected and analyzed by 23 soil scientists from Canada and around the U.S. The scientists spent 3 days collecting for the National Soil Lab. Twenty-eight Soil Scientists from the US and Canada checked, collected, analyzed soils in Bisson Lake. The scientists were reviewing soil characteristics as they changed from uplands to wetlands. The team included: G. Wade Hurt, Chairman, National Technical Committee for Hydric Soils, Warren Lynn, National Soil Lab, and Bob Eilers, Head-Manitoba

Land Resource Unit. The team became interested in the extensive seepage analysis conducted in Bisson Lake by NDSU. A 200-foot trench was dug 6 feet deep to check soil strata and ground water seepage. Partners include: Hamden Slough NWR, North Dakota State Univ., National Soil Lab, Univ. of Minnesota, University of Manitoba, NRCS.
7/30/99

Secretive Marsh Birds Study Completed at Sherburne NWR

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

A study to monitor breeding populations of secretive wetland birds on the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge was conducted in Fiscal Year 1999 following the preliminary national protocol (USFWS, 1999). Two species studied (American and least bittern) are on the Service's list of Migratory Nongame Birds of Management Concern. Because of their secretive nature, these birds are not monitored by any waterbird survey currently in use on the Refuge. The study was designed to determine the best times and methods to monitor these birds on the Refuge. The information from this study will be used to establish an annual survey that will provide a knowledge base to help the Refuge more accurately incorporate these birds into the management decisions and help monitor the impacts of management activities on these nongame bird populations. Two of the species monitored by this method, the American and least bittern are on the Service's list of Migratory

Nongame Birds of Management Concern. Partners include: St. Cloud State University. 8/6/99

Friends of the Rydell Refuge Host Fourth Annual Open House

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

Approximately 350 people attended the fourth annual open house at Rydell National Wildlife Refuge August 8, 1999. The event, hosted by the Friends of The Rydell Refuge, included horse-drawn hay rides, an ice cream social, wildlife and interpretive displays, and hiking on the new, fully-accessible trails. A highlight of the day was a presentation by Virgil Benoit of the North Dakota Historical Society titled "Views From the Oxcart," depicting the 19th century oxcart trade in the area. Visitors also received information about other Service programs. 8/8/99

350 Attend Fourth Annual Open House at Rydell NWR
Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

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other Service programs. Partners include: Friends of the Rydell Refuge and volunteers. 8/8/99

Joint USGS/FWS Upper Mississippi River Congressional Task Force Staff Tour
External Affairs

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey hosted a Mississippi River tour for Washington, D.C. congressional staff members of the Upper Mississippi River Congressional Task Force on August 10-12, 1999. Lynh Nguyen, of Representative Evans (D-17th IL) staff, Ed Buckner, of Representative Kind's (D-3rd WI) staff, Amy Trotter, of Representative Leach's (R-1st IA) staff, Sam Willett, of Representative Gutknecht's (R-1st MN) staff, and Ted Illston of the Northeast Midwest Institute joined the tour. During the afternoon of August 10, 1999, the staff flew along the Mississippi River and learned about the river geomorphology and values of the river. On August 11-12, 1999, the staff toured the river and learned about the habitats and development threats to the habitat, EMP, contaminant/nutrient issues, WRD, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service programs, joint USGS/FWS efforts on the river, monitoring, Comprehensive Conservation Plans, LTRM, and Habitat Needs Assessments. 8/10/99

Purchase of a 640 Acre WPA Tract Gains County Approval.
Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC

The Fergus Falls Wetland Acquisition Office and Wetland

Management District received Otter Tail county commissioner certification for purchase of a 640-acre Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) along the Red River Valley beachline. The tract contains 150 acres of native prairie, 22 drained and 21 existing wetlands and links two other WPAs containing 480 acres. Prior to the meeting Appraiser Don Kleven took extra effort to address all the commissioners concerns resulting in a swift approval of this large tract. 8/10/99

Congressional Staff Tour of Western Minnesota
External Affairs

John Revier, a member of Minnesota Senator Rod Grams' Washington office staff, and Dave Chura, from the Senator's District Office, received an overflight tour of Service facilities in western Minnesota August 11, 1999. The congressional staff learned about the wetland management districts, wetlands and wetland restoration, National Wildlife Refuges, the new Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge, prairie restoration/harvesting/seed collecting, Prairie Pothole Joint Venture, Tribal cooperative projects, and the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center. 8/11/99

Detroit Lakes WMD Manager Interviewed on Radio and TV
Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

Detroit Lakes WMD Wetland Manager Rick Julian was interviewed August 12, 1999 by KDLM Radio Reporter Dan Ochsner about the Waterfowl Expo activities that were

scheduled for August 28. Manager Julian was also interviewed about the Waterfowl Expo for a program on the local cable station (TV3) that same day. 8/12/99

Walleye Restoration on Track in Minnesota's Red Lakes
Ashland Fishery Resources Office

Signs of walleye revival are appearing in the Red Lakes, Minnesota. Following completion of a walleye restoration plan, a total of 44 million walleye fry were stocked into the Red Lakes last May, a cooperative effort between the Red Lake Band of Chippewa, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the the Service. Personnel from Ashland Fishery Resources Office, the Red Lake tribe, and Minnesota DNR completed over 225 minutes of bottom trawling in the Upper and Lower Red Lakes. Forty-nine juvenile walleye were captured, presumably from stocked specimens. Seine hauls performed by tribal members have also captured juvenile walleye. The captured specimens will be examined for the presence of an oxytetracycline mark on the otoliths. Pat Brown, tribal fishery biologist, believes the stocking effort was successful, and the growth rate is good. Stock length of fry was 7 mm; captured specimens measured approximately 110 mm. The three most abundant forage species collected were yellow perch, spottail shiner, and freshwater drum. The yellow perch catch declined significantly from 1998 due to a

poor year class in 1999. Catches of black crappie and lake whitefish appeared to have increased from 1998, while emerald shiners appeared to have declined (observation only, catches not totaled as of this report). Partners include: Red Lake Tribal Natural Resources Department, Minnesota DNR. 8/12/99

Sherburne NWR Expands Purple Loosestrife Biological Control Program

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge has served as an insectory for the biological control of purple loosestrife for the Mississippi Headwaters-Upper Mississippi River Ecoregion since 1996. This effort was continued and expanded in Fiscal Year 1999, with over 60,000 leaf-eating beetles raised. These insects were released on the Refuge as part of our integrated pest management and shared with other Service field stations as in years past. This year the leaf-eating beetles were also shared with private landowners within the Refuge's watershed to help in their control efforts. Also, in cooperation with the Mille Lacs County, Minn. Weed Inspector, the Refuge provided loosestrife stock plants to 4-H families to help their biological control agent propagation efforts. As an unexpected bonus, several thousand of these beetles were returned to the Refuge for release. In addition, the project taught several Elk River High School students about stewardship of natural resources as they volunteered time to this

project. Beetles released on nine Refuge sites, two private sites, positively impacting over 300 wetland acres. Biological control is part of the Refuge's overall integrated pest management. Three new small infestations of loosestrife were found as a result of annual reconnaissance. Hand pulling was used to remove the plants on these sites which totalled only about three acres, but, with the potential to infest over 1,000 acres if left unchecked. Partners include: Mille Lacs County, Minn., Minnesota DNR, Elk River, Minn., High School, 4-H. 8/13/99

Handicap Accessible Fire Exit-Viewing Deck Installed.

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

A 100-foot-long by eight-foot-wide wooden ramp was built in August to create a handicap-accessible exit from the Refuge office conference room. A viewing area that included a new viewing scope, was also incorporated into the deck. This area is used by most visitors, especially school groups. 8/13/99

Detroit Lakes WMD Staffs Booth at Becker County Fair

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

The Detroit Lakes WMD staffed an information booth at the Becker County Fair's Natural Resources Building August 11-14, 1999. Visitors were informed about the Service, the Wetland Management District, wetland and upland restoration opportunities, volunteer opportunities, wildlife, and other natural

resources topics. An estimated 15,000 people visited the Natural Resources Building during the four-day event. 8/14/99

Agassiz NWR Grebe Study-Fiscal Year 1999 Field Summary

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

This study is being conducted under a cooperative agreement with Dr. Bruce Eichhorst, University of North Dakota. Seven dummy eggs with data loggers were placed in the nests of two pied-billed grebe and five red-necked grebe to monitor incubation time and temperature, time on nest and periods of absence. Ten radios and a receiver/antenna were purchased to monitor bird movement for nesting sites as a result of drawdowns. Only three red-necked grebes were radioed by implant due to wet weather, and nesting was pretty much over by the time the radios arrived. Heavy metal samples were collected and sent to partner for analysis included: Pied-billed grebe (seven eggs/feathers from 12 juveniles); eared grebe (13 eggs/feathers from 24 adults/11 juveniles); red necked grebe (16 eggs/feathers from six adults/13 juveniles). Final field report pending - GIS vegetative layer sent for collaboration October 22, 1999. Partners include: Dr. Bruce Eichhorst, University of North Dakota, Dr. Joanna Burger, Rutgers, New Jersey and volunteers. 8/15/99

Neal Smith NWR's Tallgrass Trail Resurfaced, Reopened to Public

Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge

After being closed to the public for more than two years due to concerns due to safety concerns, the 2.2-mile Tallgrass Trail at Neal Smith NWR has been resurfaced and reopened to the public. The original aggregate surface continued to wash away during heavy rains. The trail was resurfaced with asphalt. 8/15/99

Minnesota Federal Aid Grant Field Review

Federal Aid

Federal Aid employees Dick Tolbers, Niki DesRosier, and SCEP student Joy Hiromasa participated in a field review of nine State wildlife management areas/offices in the southern and west-central portions of Minnesota on August 17-19, 1999. Field reviews of federal aid sites allows those who are have federal grant responsibilities the opportunity to discuss with state grant administrators and project managers progress on the goals and objectives and to actually view the sites. Two sites were specifically recognized as success stories: Whitewater State Wildlife Management Area, and Farmland Wildlife Population Research Office. Whitewater WMA is a 28,000-acre State wildlife management area area being managed for not only wildlife but for sportfish. Some of the wildlife management activities observed included the restoration of grade stabilization ponds, a number of parking lots and informational signs, coopera-

tive farming agreement tree/shrub plantings and wildlife food plots to name a few. The project is approximately 60 percent complete, it involves the restoration of about a 3-mile reach of the Main Branch of the Whitewater River in the vicinity of Dorer Pools 1, 2, and 3. This reach of the river is only about two miles upstream of where the Whitewater outlets into the Weaver Bottoms area of the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife & Fish Refuge. A number of tree revetments and rock weirs have been placed in strategic locations within the river channel to help stabilize the riverbanks and control water flows. 8/17/99

Wetland Restoration Projects Dedicated at Fergus Falls WMD

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC

The Fergus Falls Wetland Management District and Ducks Unlimited held dedications of Wetland Restoration projects on Eng Lake Waterfowl Production Area, a 27-acre wetland; and Berninghaus Waterfowl Production Area (WPA), a 30-acre wetland and 130 acres of native grass seeding. The Eng Lake project was done to recognize Mr. Bill Peabody who spent many years working for Ducks Unlimited as a Regional Representative. Berninghaus WPA near Alexandria, Minn., was dedicated to Warren Stefanski, a life sponsor and long time Ducks Unlimited supporter. Both projects were cost shared. Partners include: Ducks Unlimited. 8/20/99

Lakes on White Earth Reservation Surveyed by LaCrosse Staff

LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office

Service Staff from LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office(FRO) conducted surveys on four lakes on the White Earth Reservation to help determine the success of the walleye stocking program. The lakes were netted and electrofished by staff from the White Earth Biology Department (WEBD) and the LaCrosse FRO. The walleye management program is the most time consuming project that the WEBD works on, managing over 50 lakes for walleye. 8/20/99

Litchfield WMD Helps Educate Youths at Waterfowl Camp

Litchfield Wetland Management District

Woody Camp, near Benson, Minn., is an annual Minnesota Waterfowl Association youth workshop that educates 13-15 year-old youths about waterfowl habitat, ecology, and waterfowl hunting skills. Staff from Litchfield Wetland Management District serve as instructors, teaching waterfowl identification, judgemental shooting and gun handling, boat safety and cold water survival, decoying, orienteering, and game care. The District staff also provided youths with a simulated shooting experience on the Division of Federal Aid's S.A.F.E.T.Y. firearm training system, a camp favorite activity. Thirty-seven youths successfully completed this year's

week long course. Partners include: Minnesota Waterfowl Association; Minnesota DNR-Section of Wildlife; Minnesota Duck and Goose Callers Association. 8/21/99

American Bittern Program Highlights August Open House

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

On Sunday, August 22, 1999 Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge hosted an open house as part of the continuing summer programs. Refuge Biologist Gary Huschle presented a program on satellite radio collared American bitterns wintering in southern United States during 1998-1999. The Refuge's 100-foot observation tower was open during the open house. The office is open to the public one weekend day each month to listen to a scheduled program, to talk to refuge personnel about natural resources and purchase items offered for sale in the bookshop. Refuge tours were also offered during the open house but unfortunately no people signed up for either tour. Attendees were informed about the migration route and the location of the four radio collared bitterns wintering in southern United States. Doughnuts, cookies and refreshments were provided by the Agassiz Audubon Society, Warren, Minn. 8/22/99

Service Joins U.S.-Canadian Agencies For Border Surveillance Operation

Alaska Law Enforcement
Four Service special agents joined agents from other U.S.

and Canadian law enforcement agencies to gather information about smuggling trends along the U.S.-Canadian border in northwest Minnesota. Service agents from Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa participated in the two-day interagency operation, which gathered information about violation methods, smuggling threats and trends, conveyances and contraband along a 56-mile stretch of border from Baudette to Rainy Lake in Minn. In addition to the Service, participating agencies included the U.S. Customs Service (lead agency), U.S. Border Patrol, Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Immigration Service, U.S. Park Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Minnesota State Patrol, Koochiching County Sheriff's Office, International Falls Police Department, and Canada Customs. Surveillance was conducted with assistance from U.S. Customs aircraft of individuals illegally crossing the international border from Canada to the U.S., or from the U.S. to Canada, via land, air and water. Numerous vessels were inspected coming into the United States from Canada and entering Canada from the United States. Violations encountered included operating vessels under the influence of alcohol, possession of narcotics and various boating and fishing violations. Warnings were issued by Canada Customs regarding Canadian reporting requirements for entry into Canada. U.S. Customs was heavily involved in educating U.S. and Canadian residents

about proper requirements for entering the U.S. from remote border areas. 8/22/99

Partner-Funded First Draft of Oak Savanna Education Curriculum Completed *Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge*

The first draft of a 125 page environmental education curriculum titled "Exploring the Oak Savanna" at Sherburne NWR was completed August 22 through a grant received by the Friends of Sherburne NWR from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in partnership with the Service, National Wildlife Refuge Association and National Audubon Society. The curriculum was written by four local teachers. Two were funded through the grant and two donated their services. The grant also allowed equipment to be purchased to support the activities. Three refuge volunteers donated over 100 hours of time doing the layout typing and assembly of the 25 notebooks produced as first draft copies. The final product will be printed after receiving editorial feedback from teachers who will test-run the activities with their students following attendance at a teacher workshop on the curriculum. Partners include: The Friends of Sherburne NWR, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, National Wildlife Refuge Association, National Audubon Society, Elk River School District, Princeton School District, St. Cloud School District, Elk River Lions Club and Minnesota Bowhunters Inc. 8/22/99

Teachers Cover New Oak Savanna Curriculum at Sherburne NWR

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

Fourteen educators participated in the first teacher workshop at Sherburne NWR to cover the new "Exploring the Oak Savanna" environmental education curriculum. Activities for the elementary school level were presented August 24, 1999, and activities for the middle school and high school level were presented the next day. Workshops were instructed by the three local teachers who partnered with Refuge staff to write the curriculum. The development of the curriculum was made possible through a grant received by the Friends of Sherburne from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in partnership with the Service, National Wildlife Refuge Association and the National Audubon Society. Partners include: Friends of Sherburne NWR, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, National Wildlife Refuge Association, and National Audubon Society. 8/25/99

Waterfowl Identification Presented to Cannon River Sportsmen

Refuges & Wildlife

Bill Hutchinson, of the Region 3 Refuge Operations office presented a waterfowl identification class at the August hunter education course sponsored by the Cannon River Sportsmen Club in Northfield, Minn. Hutchinson, who is also a club member, also distributed Ducks at a Distance taught waterfowl identification to 61

students enrolled in the course held at Northfield middle school. Partners include: Cannon River Sportsmen Club. 8/25/99

Eagle Scouts Add Railings to Boardwalk at Detroit Lakes WMD

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District Eagle Scouts from Detroit Lakes Scout Troop 646 helped District staff by constructing railings along both sides of a boardwalk that extends into the marsh near the Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District office. The Scouts built about 300 feet of railings for the boardwalk, part of the new hiking/cross-country ski trail system on the Headquarters WPA. 8/27/99

Detroit Lakes WMD Entering Boundaries in Geographic Information System

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

The Detroit Lakes WMD, with the help of a dedicated volunteer, began digitizing District WPAs into the Geographic Information System (GIS) during Fiscal Year 1999. Volunteer Aimee Schmidt spent most of the summer months digitizing WPA boundaries on the new GIS computer. She completed 80 of the 162 District WPAs. When all of the WPA boundaries are completed, the next step will be to enter management activities and vegetative mapping that can be used for record keeping and field operations. 8/27/99

Regional Director's Conference Room Renovated

External Affairs

The on-going renovations of the Regional Director's Conference room took another step forward in August with the installation of new carpeting and verticle blinds. The recent installations are among a list of improvements and renovations to the facility precipitated by modifications to office space in the Regional Offices this spring. Improvements to the conference room to date include demolition and construction of new walls, refurbishment of the existing conference table and podium, and 18 new high-back chairs. The room has also been fitted with new power outlets, computer network and telephone connections. External Affairs is also working with ABA-Contracting to determine requirements and specifications for new audio-visual presentation capability for the conference room. Planned presentation equipment improvements include a new video projection system, surround sound audio system, table-accessable computer network connections, and user-friendly remote controls. Partners include: ABA Contracting, GSA. 8/29/99

Service Provides Waterfowl Identification Tips at Cabella's Fall Expo

Refuges & Wildlife

Members of Region 3 staffed a Service display and answered visitors' questions about waterfowl identification and hunting during the two-day Fall Expo

August 28-29, 1999, at Cabella's Outdoor Sports Store in Owatonna, Minn. The theme for Service display was water-fowl identification and water-fowl hunting. Region staff from Federal Aid, External Affairs and Refuges and Wildlife represented the Service at the Expo, which was staffed by other government, non-government organizations as well as commercial outdoor equipment vendors. The Service display featured a slide show on duck identification as well as several mounted ducks (Ducks on a Stick) used to help visitors test their identification skills. Posters, brochures and Information on Service programs employees were distributed to hundreds of people attending the Expo. 8/29/99

Agassiz NWR Entrance Signs Get New Look

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Boy Scout Jason Swenson, Thief River Falls, Minnesota completed his Eagle Scout project at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge on August 30, 1999. The project consisted of constructing eight new wood frames around seven refuge entrance signs. Soil four inches deep had to be removed from around the sign in a hexagon shape. Filter fabric was placed in the removed soil area wood frame was constructed in a hexagon shape and then small rocks were placed on top of the filter fabric. This addition to the signs has added landscape beauty and will keep vegetation from growing up near the sign allowing the public to recognize that they are entering onto a national wildlife

refuge. Location of the signs are located at refuge corners and along Marshall County Road 7 which is the main road going past the refuge office. Also fifty small road, trail and pool signs and six deer hunter information signs were washed, waxed and straightened throughout the refuge. 8/30/99

Prairie Wetlands Learning Center Gets New Director

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC

Ken Garrahan arrived at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center August 30, 1999, as its new director. For the past 12 years, Mr. Garrahan served as director of Westmoor Park, a nature center in Connecticut. Garrahan has a degree in Fish and Wildlife Management and a Master's Degree in Public Administration. Mr. Garrahan's takes over from acting director, Teresa Jaskiewicz, who returns full-time to PWLC environmental education programs. 8/30/99

Agassiz's Tamarac Dike Rehabilitation Completed

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

In September 1999, Ralph McKeevar Construction, Middle River, Minn., completed recoring, raising and reshaping 3,300 feet of the northerly most section of Tamarac dike. The rehabilitation work on the two mile dike began in 1986. This section was in poor condition and floods of 1996 and 1997 further deteriorated this structure. 9/8/99

Central American Conservation Personnel Trained Through Partnership for Biodiversity

External Affairs

Jane West, Region 3 Intergovernmental Affairs Specialist, provided biological monitoring technical assistance to four globally significant protected areas of high biodiversity in Ecuador, South America, as part of the Partnership for Biodiversity. The Partnership for Biodiversity is an initiative aimed at promoting biodiversity conservation in developing countries worldwide through the joint efforts of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), and the U.S. Peace Corps. West, a representing DOI, presented a three-day workshop on biological monitoring in Spanish to 19 park guards representing protected areas, a one-day session for nine Ecuadorian technical experts, and a presentation for the U.S. Agency for International Development Office in Quito, Ecuador. The participants obtained hands on experience for monitoring landbirds, as well as an understanding of techniques for monitoring mammals, herptiles, vegetation, and fire. Partners include: U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of the Interior, The Nature Conservancy - Ecuador, Ministry of Environment - Ecuador (*Ministerio de Medio Ambiente*), Ecuadorian National Park Service (*Instituto Ecuatoriano Forestal y de Areas Naturales y Vida Silvestre*), Fundacion Antisana, Fundacion Natura,

*Foundation Ecologica
Rumicocha. 9/13/99*

Detroit Lakes WMD Partners With High School to Make a Difference in Student Career Choices

*Detroit Lakes Wetland
Management District*

Three students at Detroit Lakes High School were introduced to natural resource careers during their semester-long work experience at Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District (WMD) in Detroit Lakes, Minn. The students worked at the District office five hours a week for one school semester as part of the school's "Make a Difference" program. The students gained a feel for conservation work, experiencing several aspects of Waterfowl Production Area management including prescribed burning, upland habitat restoration, wildlife surveys, public use and outreach. In addition, they learned about the Detroit Lakes WMD and the educational requirements needed to pursue career opportunities with Service. 9/15/99

LaCrosse FRO Staff Harvest Walley Fingerlings at Rydell NWR

*LaCrosse Fishery Resources
Office*

Staff from LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office helped harvest more than 4,500 large (eight to 10-inch) walleye fingerlings from Rydell National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) for stocking into waters on the Red Lake Reservation, Minnesota and Desoto NWR. Approximately 2,000 fish were sent to Desoto NWR which meet their request for this

year. The remainder were stocked into a small lake on the Red Lake Reservation. Both stockings help provide increased recreational fishing opportunities. Partners include: Genoa National Fish Hatchery and Rydell NWR. 9/15/99

NAWCA Grants Bring \$3.3 million to Region 3 Partners Refuges & Wildlife

On September 15, 1999, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission approved four North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grants to Region 3 partners, for a total of \$3,339,980. The Cache River Wetlands III project will allow the Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy to acquire a key parcel in the Cache River basin of southern Illinois, critical for a future re-connection of the Upper and Lower Cache Rivers. The Missouri Four Rivers Wetland III project will allow the Missouri Department of Conservation to expand protected acreage in the floodplains of the Marmaton, Little Osage, Marais des Cygnes and Osage Rivers, which will be restored to bottomland forest and a diversity of other wetland habitats. The Northcentral Iowa Wetland Project will allow the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and other partners to maximize the effectiveness of the Emergency Wetland Reserve Program in a five-county area. Lastly, the Michigan Upper Peninsula Coastal Wetland project will benefit a multitude of partners by protecting and restoring coastal wetlands and associated up-

lands in the Lake Superior and St. Mary's River watersheds of Michigan. Partners include: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, Missouri Department of Conservation, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Anheuser-Busch, Inc., Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, U.S. Forest Service, Worth County Conservation Board, Pheasants Forever, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Bay Mills Indian Community, Village of L'Anse, Mich. 9/15/99

Detroit Lakes WMD Helps Fourth Graders Learn About Native Prairie

*Detroit Lakes Wetland
Management District*

The Detroit Lakes WMD is working with the Detroit Lakes School System and several fourth grade teachers to establish some native grass and forb plantings on school properties to be used as instructional areas for fourth graders. The students will learn about prairie soils, native prairie plants, and wildlife. Each year, fourth grade students will be involved in planting a small area of the school yard to native forbs and grasses. On Sept. 16, 1999, 100 Detroit Lakes fourth graders made a field trip to the Flickertail and Bay Lake WPAs to watch the combines harvest native prairie seed and do some hand collecting of seed so they could run germination tests. 9/16/99

100 Volunteers Help Band Ducks at Agassiz NWR

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

One-hundred student volunteers participated in a public duck banding session at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge Sept. 16, 1999. Twenty participants were students at the University of Minnesota-Crookston, Crookston, Minn., and eight participants were students at Perham High School, Perham, Minn. Other participants were individuals from surrounding communities. Nearly all participants took part in the banding the operation. One-hundred and thirty-nine mallards, 38 pintails and six blue-winged teal were captured and banded. Partners include: Members of the public were partners in helping band the ducks. 9/16/99

Detroit Lakes WMD Participates in Private Grazing Seminar

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

In cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Wildlife Biologist John Gunderson participated in a Range Management/Grazing Workshop on September 22-23, 1999 for NRCS personnel who had limited training or exposure to grazing plans and grazing practices. Biologist Gunderson spoke to the group about the Private Lands Grazing Program that was started on the Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District in 1996. This program, which is similar to the Fish and Wildlife Service and Duck Unlimited private lands grazing programs in

North and South Dakota, furnishes all of the necessary fencing materials for pasture systems with three or more paddocks if the landowner will follow a grazing management plan for a minimum of ten years. 9/23/99

Wildlife to Benefit From Agreement on Three Hydroelectric Projects on the Lower Chippewa River

Green Bay Field Office

The Green Bay Field Office, together with several stakeholders, has made substantial progress on formulating a settlement agreement with the Northern States Power Company for three hydro projects on the lower Chippewa River. Substantial benefits to fish, wildlife, and recreational resources are expected when the settlement agreement is completed, including substantial improvements in project operations systemwide, improvement of approximately 110 miles of riverine habitat, a plan to protect fish from entrainment and turbine mortality, a plan to improve land and wildlife management on project lands, protection of federally-listed threatened and endangered species and their habitats, and improvements to recreational facilities. Partners include: Northern States Power Company, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, National Park Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, River Alliance of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Area Residents Association, Lake Holcombe Improvement Association, Lower Chippewa River Restoration Coalition, Chippewa Rod and Gun Club,

Wisconsin Conservation Congress, and the City of Eau Claire, Wis. 9/23/99

Minnesota DNR Conducts Waterfowl Enforcement Training at PWLC

Fergus Falls Wetland

Management District/PWLC

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources held their Waterfowl Enforcement Training at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center in mid-September. A number of those attending the training stayed overnight in the residential building. While the Visitor Center was fully booked with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and three other meetings, PWLC environmental educator, Teresa Jaskiewicz, conducted an Observation Skills activity with each of the seven classes of seventh graders at the Fergus Falls Middle School. Friday at the Learning Center found Jeff Moon and Amy Beske's seventh graders conducting Prairie Site Surveys and a kindergarten class from Eisenhower Elementary School participating in an environmental education activity on colors. 9/17/99

Detroit Lakes WMD Manager Interviewed by Fargo Television

Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District

Chad Koel, WDAY-TV 6 in Fargo, North Dakota, interviewed Wetland Manager Rick Julian at the Detroit Lakes Wetland District office Sept. 21., 1999, for a program on the fall waterfowl flight forecast, waterfowl population trends, and the activities at the Detroit Lakes WMD in wetland

restoration, upland restoration and educational programs.
9/21/99

Sherburne NWR Host 800 Students During Environmental Education Days

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

More than 800 Minnesota fifth grade students from eight schools in Sherburne County, and one school in Benton County participated in the annual Environmental Education Days Sept. 20-23, 1999 at Sherburne NWR. Sherburne NWR and Sand Dunes State Forest were joint host sites for the annual event, which was also included 60 chaperones. The event was coordinated cooperatively by five public and one private natural resource agencies which included Sherburne NWR, the University of Minnesota Extension for Sherburne County, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Forestry Division, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Sherburne County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Wildlife Science Center. Refuge staff and volunteers taught programs on Wildlife Management-the Bald Eagle and on Prescribed Fire Effects. Topics covered by the other agencies included Forest Management, Wolf Management, Soils, Ground Water, Water Usage and Wetland Values. Partners include: University of Minnesota Extension for Sherburne County, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Forestry Division, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Sherburne County Soil and

Water Conservation District, and the Wildlife Science Center. 9/23/99

Fergus Falls Special Needs Students Learn About Snakes

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC

Teresa Jaskiewicz, environmental educator at Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, took her activity on snakes to two groups of special needs students at the Cleveland Elementary School in Fergus Falls, Minn. School groups visiting the Learning Center included six groups from Eisenhower Elementary School in Fergus Falls, and a group from Our Lady of Victory Catholic School in Fergus Falls. They participated in environmental education programs and activities on colors and animals & their characteristics. Cub Scouts from Ashby received a program on Birds and their Habitat during their visit to the PWLC. A group of parents and children from Early Childhood Family Education participated in the Bats Eat Bugs Program during their visit. Dave Ellis, Adams Elementary School Teacher, brought third and fourth graders to the PWLC to conduct their site surveys. A group of special needs adults were brought to the Learning Center through a Community Education Program. These adults toured the Visitor Center and crossed the floating bridge on their trail walk. The "touch table" in the Visitor Center as a big hit with the group. 9/24/99

Master Gardener State Conference Held at Fergus Falls WMD

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC
Chuck Vukonich from the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District led a group of 30 attendees to the Master Gardener State Conference on a prairie walk to highlight species found on the tall grass prairie Sept. 24, 1999. The group walked the One Mile Prairie trail on the east edge of Fergus Falls. Vukonich provided good examples of native tall grass prairie and talked about fire and identified many native species. Partners include: Master Gardner State Committee. 9/24/99

Youth Deer Hunt Offered at Union Slough NWR

Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge

An early youth deer hunt was held at Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge Sept. 25-26, 1999. To provide a high quality recreational experience, eight participants—four per day—hunted in Unit 1 of the Refuge. All youth hunters were accompanied by an adult. Deer of either sex were allowed to be taken during the hunt, which was conducted from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. Everyone saw deer, and a few shots were fired, but none of the young hunters were able to bag a deer. Despite the lack of hunting success, all the young hunters felt the experience was worthwhile. 9/25/99

Refuge Staff Host Waterfowl Expo at Agassiz NWR

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

Refuge staff hosted its Waterfowl Expo September 26, 1999, at Agassiz NWR. About 30 people attended the Expo, which included a waterfowl identification slide show; use of Federal Aid's Simulated Action Firearm Education Training (For Youth (S.A.F.E.T.Y.) computerized shooting trainer; dog training and retrieving; water decoy placement and calling and blind and the showing of the Service's 20-minute video, "Status of Waterfowl." Six wildlife art prints donated by the Thief River Falls Chapter of Ducks Unlimited were awarded by drawing to visitors attending the event. 9/26/99 Wisconsin Approves Statewide Habitat Conservation Plan for Karner Blue Butterfly Ecological Services Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt joined Region 3 of the Fish and Wildlife Service at the Sandhill Wildlife Management Area in central Wisconsin Sept. 27, 1999, to announce approval of a Statewide Habitat Conservation Plan designed to protect the endangered Karner blue butterfly. The plan will help protect the butterfly while allowing land use and land management activities to continue. Regional Director Bill Hartwig issued an incidental take permit to the Department of Natural Resources and 25 private partners, authorizing implementation of the Plan throughout Wisconsin. The Habitat Conservation Plan is the first of its kind in the nation. It includes a variety of activities such as

forestry, right-of-way management, and habitat restoration that, when carried out, may incidentally take the endangered butterfly. The Karner blue butterfly is unique in its need to have disturbance to thrive. Long term survival of the populations on the landscape must include the very types of activities that involve some take of individual butterflies. The Plan has been developed to accomplish a goal of no net loss of available butterfly habitat over its 10-year implementation. The Plan also involves an innovative strategy to include private landowners in Wisconsin through a voluntary conservation effort. An extensive landowner contact program will be carried out by the Department of Natural Resources and HCP partners to demonstrate that the butterfly and land users can, indeed, co-exist in ways that benefit both. In addition to Secretary Babbitt and Regional Director Hartwig, the commemorating event featured endorsements by representatives of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, forest industry, conservation organizations and private landowners. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt praised the effort as an example of the flexibility of the Endangered Species Act and the value of developing partnerships to create innovative approaches across a broad landscape. Partners include: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Alliant Energy-Wisconsin Power & Light Company; ANR Pipeline; Burnett County Forest; Clark County Forest; Consolidated Papers Inc; Eau Claire County Forest;

Jackson County Forest; Johnson Timber Company; Juneau County Forest; Lakehead Pipeline; Monroe County Forest; Nekoosa Papers, Inc; Northern States Power Company; Northwestern Wisconsin Electric Company; Polk - Burnett Electric Cooperative; The Nature Conservancy; Thilmany Division - International Paper; Washburn County Forest; Wausau-Mosinee Paper Corporation; Wisconsin Gas Company; Wisconsin Public Service Corporation; Wisconsin River Power Company; Wisconsin Department Of Transportation; Wisconsin Departments Of Trade, Agriculture and Consumer Protection and Wood County Forest. 9/27/99

LaCrosse FRO Continues to Monitor Fish Species of Concern

LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office

Staff at LaCrosse Fishery Resources Office continued to monitor interjurisdictional fish species of Special Concern through Fiscal Year 1999. Sampling efforts collected adult paddlefish and lake sturgeon in the Wisconsin, Chippewa, Minnesota, and Mississippi Rivers. Larval samples were collected on the Chippewa River. Seventy-eight paddlefish were newly tagged and 30 were recaptured from previous tagging efforts, some as far back as 1993. Of the 64 lake sturgeon capture events, six were recaptures. One lake sturgeon originally tagged in Pool 5A of the Mississippi River in 1995 was recaptured by hook and line two times in the same week in Pool 10.

Paddlefish and lake sturgeon were the target species of the sampling efforts, but this year was the first time blue sucker were also collected. In April of 1999, twenty blue suckers with free flowing eggs and milt were captured in the Wisconsin River near Prairie du Sac Wisconsin. The blue sucker is listed as a Threatened Species by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and is a federal species of Special Concern. Collection of spawning blue sucker in the sampling area further documents the importance of this habitat for numerous fish populations. The additional tag data collected on paddlefish has been added to the FRO's extensive paddlefish tag database and will enable thorough and continued assessment of this species' population status. The lake sturgeon tag database is in its infancy and will require additional efforts to enable assessment of lake sturgeon population status. La Crosse FRO is gearing up to initiate a mark-recapture study on blue sucker during Fiscal Year 2000. Partners include: Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources, U.S. Geological Survey-Biological Research Division. 9/28/99

Wetland Restorations in the Fergus Falls WMD

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC
Seventy-five wetland restorations were completed by Fergus Falls Wetland Management District during Fiscal Year 1999. Restorations involved 19 landowners, totaling of 228 acres. The work was accomplished in Otter Tail,

Douglas and Grant counties, Minnesota
Partners include: Ducks Unlimited. 9/30/99

Boundary Posting Accomplishments at Fergus Falls WMD

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC

The Fergus Falls Wetland Management District was able to boundary post 139 miles of Waterfowl Production Areas during Fiscal Year 1999. The boundary posting includes 712 signs that were new or replaced and 528 new posts. Faded, shot or missing signs were replaced. The posting is also included new boundaries established since the previous posting. 9/30/99

Acquisition Achievements at Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC
During Fiscal year 1999, the Fergus Falls Wetland Acquisition Office and Wetland Management District optioned 17 wetland easement properties, five fee purchase areas, two grassland easements and one access easement for a total of 2,683 acres. The properties are in Otter Tail, Douglas, Grant and Wilken counties. 9/30/99

Neal Smith Visitation Numbers for Fiscal Year 1999

Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge
Approximately 77,500 people visited Iowa's Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge during Fiscal Year 1999. Approximately 12,000 students participated in Refuge environ-

mental education programs during the year. 9/30/99

Water Control Structures Replaced at Fergus Falls WMD

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC

The Fergus Falls Wetland Management District actively manages 39 water control structures, 19 of which are in various stages of drawdown. In most cases, the drawdowns are being used to enhance vegetation. Each year the wetlands are monitored for vegetation growth, water quality, minnows and bird use to determine what management actions will be taken. The structures on Stowe Lake, Odens and Nicholson Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) were replaced. The replacement of water control structures at Ten Mile WPA, Rossow WPA, Eng Lake and Mickelson WPA was also completed. The replacement of these structures was funded by Ducks Unlimited. Funding for the Ten Mile structure, which was the largest project, was a donation to Ducks Unlimited from a local citizen. Partners include: Ducks Unlimited. 9/30/99

Carterville FRO Manages National Paddlefish Database & Coded-Wire Tag Processing Center

Carterville Fishery Resources Office

The Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Research Association (MICRA) national paddlefish database and an associated coded-wire tag processing center are managed by the Carterville Fish-

Continued next page.

ery Resources Office (FRO). During Fiscal Year 1999, the Center processed 5,370 coded-wire reference tags from wild captured fish and 104 reference tags for 52 stockings of 85,492 hatchery reared fish. Coded-wire tags recovered from 281 recaptured paddlefish were processed and linked to release data in the database. At the end of the fiscal year, the database contains individual records for 1.1 million stocked paddlefish, more than 9,000 wild tagged paddlefish and nearly 1,000 tag recoveries.

Long and short distance migrations between state management jurisdictions and between important paddlefish habitats have been documented. Individual data summaries were constructed and distributed to participating states. MICRA is comprised of 28 member state natural resource agencies. Twenty-three states contributed to the MICRA paddlefish database.

The national study is designed to assess the population status of paddlefish, formulate estimates of harvest and exploitation, and to describe their movement and migration patterns throughout the Mississippi Basin.

The project will continue during Fiscal Year 2000.

Partners include: Blind Pony NFH; Carbon Hill NFH; Centerton NFH; Garrison Dam NFH; Gavins Point NFH; Mammoth Spring NFH; Natchitoches NFH; Neosho NFH; Private John Allen NFH; Tishmingo NFH; Uvalde NFH; Alabama, Arkansas and North Dakota Divisions of Game & Fish; Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois,

Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin and West Virginia Departments of Natural Resources; Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks; Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife, Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries; Mississippi and Montana Departments of Wildlife, Fish, & Parks; Missouri Department of Conservation; Nebraska Game & Parks Commission; New York Department of Environmental Conservation; Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation; Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission; South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, & Parks; Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. 9/30/99

Volunteers Contribute Nearly 20,000 Hours to Projects at Agassiz NWR *Agassiz Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge*

Twenty-eight volunteers at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge Contributed 19,982 hours to Refuge activities and projects during Fiscal Year 1999. Most volunteer hours were spent on research projects. Project highlights are as follows:

Wolf Research

Volunteers: 11 Hours: 9,623

Moose Research

Volunteers: 9 Hours: 9,100

Grebe Research

Volunteers: 1 Hours: 321

Bittern Research

Volunteers: 2 Hours: 80

Airboat Engine Overhaul

Volunteers: 4 Hours: 416

Most volunteers commit a minimum of three months to research project. The majority of their time is spent on track-

ing radio collared animals, performing necropsies, collecting scat/examining, and entering data. Our Heartfelt thanks to: Eric Cox, Saleen Richter, Stefanie Naftal, Terri Barnett, Eric Bergman, David Grandmason, Marci Johnson, Pat Sharkey, Elizabeth Joyce, Jeff Sikich, Muntifering, Scott Graham, Leslie Schutte, Rama Callan, Erin Harrington, Marci Clark, Hilary Tall, Stacie LaDucer, Jeff S, John Toepfer, Hannah ter Hofstede, Tammy Laney, Sam Kezar, and Northland Comm. Tech. College Students. The Airboat Engine Overhaul saved the government \$7,000-\$10,000, while providing students a learning experience. The volunteer program cost \$13,700, with most funding food allowances and utilities for the bunkhouse. Funds were also spent on training (GIS, ATV(snowmobile/four-wheel), MSDS, Fire(S-130 & S-190) and recognition. This figure does not include staff time/salaries. Partners include: Minnesota DNR. 9/30/99

Predator Exclosure Fences Enhance Production Rates at Fergus Falls WMD

Fergus Falls Wetland

Management District/PWLC

The Fergus Falls Wetland Management District again operated 10 predator exclosure fences in Fiscal Year 1999, covering 340 acres of nesting cover. A total of 105 nests were found through casual observation, three of the units were nested dragged. Of 105 nests, 66 percent hatched, 19 percent were destroyed, 14 percent were abandon and 1 percent un-

known. These are straight percentages and not Mayfield nest success rates. These areas are also trapped to try and eliminate predators. Skunk, mink and racoon make up 84 percent of the animals that were trapped. The staff also completed the four square mile breeding waterfowl count survey. Partners include: Minnesota DNR. 9/30/99

Agassiz NWR Wolf Study - Fiscal Year 1999 Field Summary

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

This study was initiated in 1996; intensive field work will be completed by December 1999. In the previous two field seasons it was determined that Agassiz NWR harbored two wolf packs; the Golden Valley Pack (GVP) and the Elm Lake Pack (ELP).

In February 1999, four GVP wolves were net-gunned from a helicopter. No wolves from the ELP were captured. This pack had been infected with mange and in December 1998, two radio-collared wolves (and probably the entire pack) had died from starvation and exposure caused by mange. This left the ELP territory vacant, with only five wolves left on Agassiz NWR in March. In March 1999, a female juvenile GVP radio-collared wolf dispersed into the vacated ELP territory and remained there for the rest of the year. She was joined by another wolf (origin unknown) in August 1999; the two have remained together in the area.

In April 1999, the GVP produced five pups and at one point had a pack size of 10

animals. A juvenile radio-collared wolf was trapped on private land at a livestock depredation site by a federal trapper on the north side of the Refuge.

Currently the GVP pack size is nine wolves. By the end of Fiscal Year 1999, the total number of wolves on Agassiz NWR was about 11 from two packs (GVP/ new ELP; +/- dispersing wolves.)

One hundred 24-hour tracking stints were performed between October-November 1998 and April-September 1999 to determine how often and how much time Refuge wolves spend near livestock in the surrounding area.

Analysis of the movement data is pending and awaiting collaboration with map (GIS) analysis. Over 600 wolf scats were examined for prey content. Preliminary results indicate that deer are the primary prey item with muskrat, moose, livestock and hare as the other significant items. A questionnaire survey was designed and will be sent to local landowners.

During Fiscal Year 1999, 11 volunteers contributed 9,623 hours to the wolf project. Partners include: Utah State University, Dr. Eric Gese, Research Assistant Professor; Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Conservation Partner Funds; Prairie Wind Middle School/Perham High School, Betsy Reneke, teacher. 9/30/99

Agassiz & Big Stone NWR Bittern Study - Fiscal Year 1999 Field Summary

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

The Bittern Study at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge was designed to be conducted in three phases over seven years; two phases were completed with Master Degree SCEP students. Phase III was initiated in Fiscal Year 1999, and expanded to include Big Stone NWR/Prairie Potholes. The following is a list of accomplishments for Fiscal Year 1999:

Bitterns: two of four adult birds satellite collared in fall 1998 returned to Minnesota. Six males and one female adult radio-tagged in 1998, returned to near the original capture sites (four to Agassiz NWR, three to Red Lake) only one of these birds was recaptured and collared. Fourteen birds (12 males/2 females) were radio-collared and another four adults were satellite collared (\$14,200 satellite/data time) in August. One satellite collared bird began moving south Sept 30, 1998.

During winter reconnaissance in January researchers visited sites and documented vegetation (by boat, plane and vehicle) where satellite collared birds stopped during fall migration or wintered in Florida and Louisiana. Numerous contacts were made for future monitoring. MS SCEP student Tammy Laney arrived April 30, 1999, to capture, collar, and monitor birds on Agassiz NWR before transferring to Big Stone NWR for prairie pothole

component of study. Laney conducted nest searches, inventoried wetlands and contacted private landowners for access. Ph.D-candidate and Service Employee Soch Lor arrived May 15, 1999, to begin Phase III. Lor captured, collared, monitored birds; completed measuring nest site parameters for nine nests on Agassiz NWR and seven at Red Lake Reservation. She also completed random samples to compare nest sites; surveyed listening stations. Unusually wet conditions throughout spring and summer caused erratic bird behavior presenting challenges to capturing birds; as a result efforts were focused on nesting parameters. Partners include: Dr. John Toepfer; Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians; Agassiz Audubon; University of Missouri-Columbia, Dr. Leigh Fredrickson.
9/30/99

Easement Enforcement at Fergus Falls WMD

Fergus Falls Wetland

Management District/PWLC

The Fergus Falls Wetland Management District inspected all wetland, grassland and FmHA easements to detect potential violations of the easement restrictions on approximately 115,000 acres of easement lands in northwest Minnesota. This was accomplished through an aerial flight and ground truthing for those easements in question. Two FmHA areas had a fence installed to prevent any further violations from occurring.
9/30/99

GIS Mapping of Agassiz NWR Vegetative Layer Completed

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

In September, the U.S. Geological Survey's Environmental Management Technical Center completed a two-year GIS (Geographic Information System) project for Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge and surrounding area. The project maps the vegetative layer on computerized maps for the 61,000 acre Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge and 20,000 acres of surrounding Wildlife Management areas. The project began in August 1997, and includes 1997 aerial infra-red/color photos of the area for baseline data. The layer will greatly benefit the analysis of data collected on numerous wildlife research projects including analysis of radio collared moose, wolf, bittern and grebe movements, nesting and resting sites; assessing fire and water management impacts; and facility maintenance.
9/30/99

Iowa Wetland Management District Accomplishments for Fiscal Year 1999

Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge

The following activities and accomplishments occurred on Iowa Wetland Management District (WMD) during Fiscal Year 1999: Two hundred eleven acres of wetlands were restored on newly acquired Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) in Iowa using a combination of North American Waterfowl and Ducks Unlimited funds. Eight hundred fifty seven acres of former cropland

was seeded to a mix of native grasses and forbs on WPAs throughout northern Iowa in cooperation with Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

The largest single block was at Hanlonton Slough WPA, where 360 acres were seeded by staff from the Refuge staff and Iowa DNR.

Iowa DNR burned nearly 900 acres on WPAs in 1999. Six trumpeter swans were released at Union Hills WPA. The event was celebrated by local dignitaries including new Iowa DNR Chief, Paul Johnson, and over 150 local school children. The event was covered by local television and radio.

Iowa WMD harvesting efforts totaled 528 acres. The harvest was accomplished by staff from the Service, Iowa DNR and contract harvesters.

Recognized as an area rich in restorable wetlands, the counties of Winnebago, Worth, Hancock, and Cerro Gordo became an area of special concern during 1998. A coalition of personnel from the Service, Iowa DNR, and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service initiated, through the Small Wetlands Acquisition Program, the buyout of properties enrolled in USDA's Wetland Reserve Program. The goal for acquisition of land in this area has been set at 4,000 acres per year for five years.

Using Maynard Reece WPA as a model, this initiative began with the Hanlontown Slough WPA project, an area composed of eight contiguous tracts totaling approximately 950 acres. Acquisition began with Fiscal Year 1998 funding

and continued in earnest during Fiscal Year 1999. Partners include: Iowa DNR, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Ducks Unlimited, Kossuth and Winnegago Counties Conservation Boards. 9/30/99

Union Slough NWR Highlights Fiscal Year 1999 Accomplishments

Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge

The following activities and accomplishments occurred at Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge during Fiscal Year 1999: One hundred fourteen acres of private wetlands and 270 acres of private uplands were restored by refuge staff and partners in northcentral Iowa.

Refuge staff planted 152 acres of newly acquired lands to a mix of native grasses and forbs using no-till and conventional tillage native grass drills and a new broadcast seeder designed for native grasses. Union Slough worked with other headwaters ecosystem team members to increase use of local ecotype seed.

The station purchased a combine, stripper head and other needed equipment to begin harvesting native grasses with special funds provided by the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture. Our first year's harvest provided nearly 7,000 pounds of cleaned seed, despite a late start.

The first production plots (32 acres) of local big-bluestem and local prairie mix were planted. A new cooperative effort was started with local the Soil and Water Conservation District to reduce streambank erosion

in Buffalo Creek using Clean Water Action funds. Local support has since added funds from two other sources and the project is growing. Refuge staff completed six prescribed burns totaling 512 acres on Union Slough NWR and neighboring Waterfowl Production Areas.

Five hundred wood duck and 94 Canada geese were banded in 1999. For the first time the public was invited to help during two banding efforts and the response was overwhelming, prompting us to add a third public event.

Four additional trumpeter swans were released, bringing the total since 1996 to 24. For the first time, two birds returned (and male and female from 1998) and spent the summer on the refuge, raising hopes of a nesting pair in 2000. Union Slough/Smith Lake ad hoc watershed advisory group comprised of neighboring landowners in both watersheds and various agencies prepared and mailed its first water quality news letter through the Kossuth County Farm Bureau. One new tract (Keith tract, 103 acres) was added to the refuge in the fall of 1998, and two additional tracts were appraised for possible purchase in 2000.

The new accessible floating environmental education platform was installed with staff and volunteer help. Entrance road and parking areas were redesigned and upgraded with gravel. Additional "accessibility approved" surfacing will be added in 2000. With help from the national Friends Mentoring Group a Friends of

Union Slough NWR group formed in late summer. The active core group ended the fiscal year in the midst of establishing by-laws, mission, and goals with high but realistic hopes for a functioning and growing organization in 2000. Partners include: Iowa DNR, Kossuth County, Iowa, Conservation Board, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Kossuth County Soil and Water Conservation District. 9/30/99

Northwest Minnesota Moose Study Continues Despite Deaths of Researchers

Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

A tragic chapter in the ongoing study of moose in northwest Minnesota was experienced June 11, 1999, when Eric Cox, PhD student and Grant Coyour, a pilot for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources were killed when their plane crashed while conducting the last aerial moose survey of the three year study. The summary of FY99 field results are as follows: The year began with 85 radio collared moose and ended with 58; 18 moose died, four collars dropped off yearlings as designed, and five collar batteries died. Moose pregnancy rates and calf production have increased dramatically over the past three years:

Pregnancy rate:

Location

	Agassiz NWR/Thief Lake		
	1999	1998	1997
	64%	28%	42%
	Red Lake/Beltrami		
	80%	33%	53%
	Viking Agric. Area		
	57%	43%	75%

Calf production:

Agassiz NWR/Thief Lake

1999	1998	1997
16	7	6

Red Lake/Beltrami

9	10	10
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Viking Agric. Area

13	5	10
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About 100 livers from dead moose were examined for liver fluke infestation. Fifty trace element plugs from livers were sent to the lab for analysis. Vegetation samples were collected in all three study sites to determine nutrition content.

Partners include: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Forever, Rice Area Sportsmen, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation and University of Idaho. 9/30/99

Native Prairie Restoration/Management at Fergus Falls WMD

*Fergus Falls Wetland**Management District/PWLC*

The native grass seedings and harvest for 1999 within the Fergus Falls WMD went well. A total of 745 acres was seeded at seven sites consisting of 85 acres of Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA), 500 acres of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources property and 160 acres of Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM). The Minnesota DNR provided seed for 450 acres and the District provided the remaining 295 acres. Seed was harvested from 270 acres. The seed was taken from three WPAs and one DNR tract. Each year the DNR allows the district staff to harvest native prairie tracts and in return the district staff assists with seedling. Partners include: Minnesota DNR. 9/30/99

Control of Exotic Species for Fergus Falls WMD

Fergus Falls Wetland Management District/PWLC

The Fergus Falls Wetland Management District controlled exotic plant species on 62 sites throughout the district for a total of 2,535 acres. This total represents chemical and mechanical control and does not include biological control methods. Chemical control totaled 1,524 acres and mechanical control totaled 1,011 acres. 9/30/99

Army Corps of Engineers Explores Region 3's Accomplishment Reporting System

External Affairs

External Affairs staff demonstrated the capabilities of the Region's Accomplishment Reporting System (ARS) for the Army Corps of Engineers September 29, 1999. Susan Fournier, a public affairs specialist from the Corps' district office in Cincinnati, Ohio, spent a full day learning about the reporting system's information gathering and dissemination capabilities, and how information gathered via regional accomplishments can be used by employees and leaders as a decision making tool. Fournier was introduced to ARS-based information products, such as "Inside Region 3" and the Region's Annual Report. The Corps learned about the Accomplishment Reporting System through the Midwest Natural Resources Group, an organization of federal resource agencies based in the Midwest. Both the Corps and

the Service's Region 3 are members of the group. The Corps of Engineers, like the Service is challenged to gather timely information about its resource activities from geographically dispersed offices and disseminate it to key decision makers, the media and the public. As such, the Corps' is examining the ARS for possible use in its public affairs/outreach programs. 9/29/99

Accomplishment Reporting System Enters Beta Test Period

External Affairs

External Affairs staff began Beta testing of the Phase III Upgrade to the Region's Accomplishment Reporting System July 20, 1999. Testing of the reporting systems numerous features follows months of development by External Affairs and the developer, Minnesota Computer Programming, Inc.. Testing of should be completed by July 30. The system's improvements include key word search capabilities, report archiving and an improved fax-email capability. The Accomplishment reporting system is an internet-based information gathering and dissemination system that allows Service field organizations to report initiatives and accomplishments. Noteworthy accomplishments are then shared with members of Congress, the news media and Service employees. Following testing at Region 3, the improved ARS will be made available to all Service Regions in the United States. Training for new Regional system managers is scheduled for late

August. Partners include: Minnesota Computer Programming, Inc. 7/20/99

'Inside Region 3' Highlights, Markets Region's Accomplishments

External Affairs

"Inside Region 3," an electronic newsletter based on reports submitted through the Accomplishment Reporting System, made its debut during Fiscal Year 1999. Created by External Affairs and distributed by electronic mail to all Regional employees, the full-color publication proved a popular tool for keeping employees and other key publics informed about the Region's accomplishments. Inside Region 3 debuted in January 1999 and is published approximately twice per month. About 150 accomplishments, filed from field offices, Refuges, and law enforcement agents appeared in the publication during the year. Color photos, used to illustrate accomplishments, are provided by External Affairs staff, and submitted by Service staff in the field. 9/30/99

Annual Report Documents Region's Accomplishments, Lists Goals

External Affairs

The first comprehensive collection of activities, accomplishments and goals of Region 3 programs and ecosystem teams was published in February 1999, after months of work by External Affairs staff and volunteers. The Region 3 Fiscal Year 1998 Annual Report contains more than 1,300 reports filed via the Accomplishment Reporting System during the fiscal year

by staff from ecological services and law enforcement field offices, national wildlife refuges/wetland management districts and other Service programs. The 380-page report was published electronically in portable document format (.pdf) and is available for download on the Region 3 Web site: (<http://midwest.fws.gov>) . The Report also contains a 94-page Executive Summary that summarizes the year's accomplishments and Fiscal Year 1999 goals for each Region 3 program and ecosystem team. 2/25/99

Congressional Contacts and Tours Update Lawmakers on Region's Activities

External Affairs

During the first eight months of Fiscal Year 1999 more than 500 congressional contacts were made with an average of 64 contacts per month. Congressional tours were provided in every state of the Region, new congressional members were welcomed, and Capitol Hill briefings were provided to the 114 congressional members' staff and 29 subcommittee staff. Congressional briefing books were developed for each of the states in the Region and the briefing books are now being used as the national prototype. The Region's internal congressional knowledge was emphasized and an intranet site was developed containing congressional office contact information that links to the congressional member's home page. 8/1/99

Region 3 Congressional Briefings

External Affairs

Representatives from Region 3 briefed House and Senate authorizing committee staff and the Region 3 congressional delegations on its implementation of the Director's Priorities and other high profile issues such as the proposed listing of the Canada lynx; proposed delistings of the bald eagle and timber wolf; prairie habitat restoration; invasive species; and other issues pertaining to the Great Lakes. Group briefings for the House and Senate were held on May 18, 1999. The group briefings were followed by courtesy visits to the 29 authorizing committee staff and the staff of the 114 member Region 3 congressional delegation. The congressional briefing representatives from Region 3 included: Jane West, intergovernmental affairs specialist for Region 3; Brad Johnson, assistant regional director, Federal Aid; John Rogner, field supervisor, Chicago Field Office; Lee Herzberger, manager, Muscatatuck NWR; Nancy Gilbertson, manager, Neal Smith NWR; Doug Spencer, manager, Shiawassee NWR; Mike Murphy, manager, Hamden Slough NWR; Gerald Clawson, Mingo NWR; Larry Martin, manager, Ottawa NWR; Tom Busiahn, project leader, Ashland Fishery Resources Office; and Dave Pederson, Federal Aid fishery biologist. 5/18/99